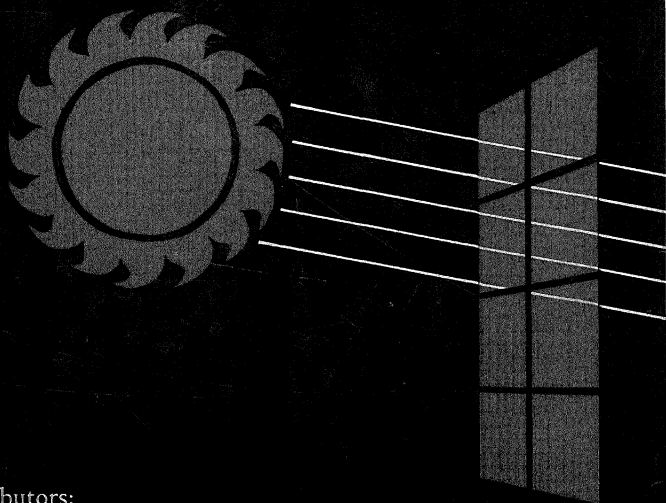


# In the Eyes of Others

*Common Misconceptions of Catholicism*

Edited by Robert W. Gleason, S.J.



Contributors:

W. Norris Clarke, Joseph S. Donceel, Joseph S. Duhamel,  
Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, Harold C. Gardiner,  
Robert W. Gleason, Vincent C. Hopkins, Gustave Weigel

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# IN THE EYES OF OTHERS

*Edited by Robert W. Gleason*

Eight prominent Jesuit scholars explore some commonly misunderstood aspects of Catholicism. Aware that the Catholic "image" is often one of an authoritarian, foreign-dominated monolith, which imposes upon its members curiously undemocratic and un-American views, the contributors seek an honest answer to questions confronting Catholic and Protestant alike. The authors often find that misunderstandings of Catholicism are rooted in man's perennial dilemmas: the conflicting claims of this world and the next, of Caesar and God, of individual and common good, of reason and faith, of liberty and decency, of self and society. The questions treated range from the sociopolitical to the religious.

VINCENT C. HOPKINS traces the historical roots of Protestant suspicion and hostility toward Catholics. Given this background of distrust, GUSTAVE WEIGEL asks whether Catholicism presents a threat to the religious freedom of other Americans and to our form of government. JOSEPH P. FITZPATRICK tries to determine the cause and meaning of Catholic association with social and political corruption.

*[Continued on back flap]*

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## INTRODUCTION

THE world of today is almost painfully self-conscious regarding the elements that go to make up what is known as a public image. Government, industry, business, the cinema, television, the theater, even the world of fine arts has become increasingly aware that there does exist for good or for ill, a public image of personalities, of situations, businesses, products, and that it is an important factor to be reckoned with. Where the image is bad, it should be corrected; where it is good it should be maintained and improved. Convinced of this typical modern need, the authors of this small volume have undertaken to examine various aspects of the public image that has been presented in the past and is still being held up today by the Roman Catholic Church. In doing so they hope to clarify certain problems, correct certain distortions, remove certain misunderstandings and thereby open the way for more fruitful contact and deeper charity among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in the pluralistic setting of twentieth century America.

In an engaging and what may prove to many to be an astonishing picture Father Vincent Hopkins, of the department of history of Fordham University, opens the work by

vividly sketching those aspects of the stereotyped picture of "the Roman Church" which have been commonly accepted by many as the true one through the early centuries of American history. Father Gustave Weigel, noted ecclesiologist, explores the familiar but false image of the Roman Catholic Church as a monolithic power bloc in political affairs and manages to alter considerably the standard picture by his thoughtful analysis of what is the official Catholic position in contrast to what may be the private viewpoint of one or another clergyman.

Father Joseph Fitzpatrick, professor of sociology at Fordham University, presents a study of a subject all too rarely examined, that of religious affiliation and its connection with crime and corruption. In the course of his article he illuminates many of the areas that clearly need deeper study before any significant analysis can be made of the Catholic and his ethical behavior on the public scene.

The ever-present bugaboo of "thought control" as commonly held to be exercised by the Catholic Church is the subject of the investigation of Father Norris Clarke, editor of the *International Philosophical Quarterly*, who examines the problem of thought control on a personalistic and individual level and demonstrates the dangers of sterile folk-Catholicism with its emphasis on conformity, in opposition to the dynamic and challenging position suggested by popes and theologians.

In his article on the study of Scripture, Father Robert Gleason, theologian and editor of this book, attempts to build a bridge between modern Protestant and Catholic thought concerning the inerrancy of the Bible.

In a masterly analysis based on natural law and Revelation, Father Joseph Duhamel, the moral theologian, discusses one

of the sorest points in the Church's alleged authoritarianism: its adamant stand on birth control. Father Harold Gardiner, the well known literary editor of *America*, reviews the official censorship policies of the Church as they really are and provides a rational theory of censorship that would be at once adult and acceptable.

Father Joseph Donceel, author of *Philosophical Psychology*, reconsiders, in the light of modern psychology, the age-old accusation that the Catholic Church has unfailingly taken an obscurantist approach to the entire female sex.

By openly examining some of the sensitive areas of conflict of viewpoint and by discussing them calmly and objectively the authors hope that they may have taken a small step in the direction of a much to be desired fuller understanding between Catholics and other Christians and between Christians and Jews. And they will be well content if they have succeeded in altering for the better the standard public image of the Roman Catholic Church "the Mystical Body of Christ."

Robert W. Gleason, S.J.



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# A COMMON PROTESTANT IMAGE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STEREOTYPE

Vincent C. Hopkins, S.J.

IN this chapter we shall endeavor to recall certain incidents and certain publications that caused, and still cause, many Protestants to view the Catholic Church with suspicious reserve, if not with outspoken condemnation. The events in question took place in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the publications appeared over the course of the years since the English religious revolution. No attempt will be made to explain the general causes of the European religious revolution of the sixteenth century, which, of course,

also have helped to form Protestant attitudes toward the Catholic Church. Instead, our effort will be restricted to tracing the growth of the stereotype many Protestants, chiefly of British or Scots descent, have of the Catholic Church and its adherents. This may throw some light on American Protestant reactions vis à vis the Catholic Church.

The religious revolution in England was not a simple thing. Without forgetting what might be described as the willfulness of Henry VIII and the guile of Anne Boleyn, we should remember that in the sixteenth century the states along the western shores of Europe were being governed more and more autocratically by strong dynasties. In England the Welsh Tudors had ruled since the Earl of Richmond (later Henry VII) defeated Richard III at Bosworth in 1485. It was Tudor policy to strengthen the throne against the subjects it considered excessively strong and thereby prevent a resurgence of the anarchy that had distracted the country during the Wars of the Roses. This policy was supported by the majority of Englishmen, who had suffered at the hands of such subjects. Among the reasons Henry VIII had for wishing his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled was this reason of state. He felt he needed a male heir who would be equal to the task of government, keep down feudal disorder, and perpetuate the dynasty. It appeared that Queen Catherine could no longer bear children and only the Princess Mary was left to succeed to the throne. So the long, dreary process of the "king's affair" ensued and, when Pope Clement VII would not annul the marriage, Archbishop Cramner did so in 1533. In the following year Henry made himself head of a Church of England and an already existing antipapal campaign was encouraged. There followed the sup-

pression of the monastic orders and the confiscation of their property, which was divided among Henry and his supporters. At this time many of the great English families, which later would play leading roles in the government of England, arose. For some of them the cultivation of a lively hatred of the Catholic Church could deaden consciences, if that were necessary. As Tacitus once remarked, it is part of human nature to hate those whom you have injured.

Henry was succeeded in 1547 by his young son by Queen Jane Seymour, Edward VI. A more "left-wing" Protestantism, upon which Henry had frowned, was pushed by Edward's advisers. When Edward died in 1553 he was succeeded by his elder half-sister, Mary, whose reign was marked by a partial Catholic revival. Half Spanish herself, she married a man whose name loomed very large in Catholic Europe, Philip II of Spain. For the Hapsburgs the motives for the marriage were largely political, but for Mary they were religious as well. Some Protestant extremists felt that English interests would be subordinated to those of Catholic Spain. Mary also put a number of Protestants to death—thereby creating "the martyrs of Smithfield"—and as a result became known in Protestant historiography as "Bloody Mary."

On Mary's death in 1558 her half-sister Elizabeth I came to the throne. Her right to that position was weakened by the rather embarrassing fact that she had been declared illegitimate by both the Pope and her father, two heads of two churches, with the concurrence of Parliament. Yet in her early years as queen she was admirably successful in winning support for her rule. This was important, for a successor with a good claim was at hand—Mary Stuart, once Queen of France and now

Queen of Scotland. After fighting a losing battle with her Scots lairds and Presbyterian divines, Mary fled to England in May, 1558, where she was kept in custody for many years. Those who were dissatisfied with Elizabeth focused their hopes on her. Among them were Catholics who did not care for Elizabeth's solution of the religious question. This consisted of the Act of Supremacy of 1559, by which the queen became supreme governor of the Church of England, and the Act of Conformity of the same year, which ordered all Englishmen to abide by her decisions on doctrine and practice. Mary was put to death in 1587, the year before Philip II, who was suspected of being her active supporter, launched the Armada against England.<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, is the general background of the times during which English anti-Catholicism was developing. Many of these events contributed to it directly. For example, the executions of Protestants under Mary were described, along with many other examples of Catholic perfidy, in great and ghastly, if not always quite accurate, detail in a book which became standard Protestant reading. This was John Foxe's *The Acts and Monuments*, better known as the *Book of Martyrs*, of which the first English edition appeared in 1563.<sup>2</sup> The Convocation of the Anglican Church of 1571 required every bishop and archdeacon to own a copy and many churches possessed one, frequently

1. The number of books on the religious revolution in England is large and the books vary in worth. Among the more recent are Msgr. Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, Sir Maurice Powicke, *The Reformation*, and T. M. Parker, *The English Reformation to 1558*. Older works have a tendency to be too polemical. William Cobbett's *History of the Reformation*, even in Cardinal Gasquet's edition, is a good example.

2. There are many editions of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. It has never been satisfactorily edited and the last full edition was by J. Pratt in eight volumes in 1877. T. M. Mozley, *John Foxe and his Book* (London, 1940), is the most recent Protestant reappraisal.

chained to the pulpit or to a pillar, so that the faithful could read in it and hate the Catholic Church the more. Sidney Lee wrote of this work that "for generations the popular concept of popery has been derived from its melancholy and bitter pages."

The 35th of the 39 Articles that stated Anglican orthodoxy directed that the clergy read, every Sunday, from the *Book of Homilies* provided for that purpose. In these no doubt was left as to who the enemy was—the Catholic Church. On Pentecost, for example, some instances of the overweening pride of the Popes were stressed. "What shall we say of him," the writer queried at one point in this discourse, "that made the noble king Dandalus to be tied by the neck with a chain and to lie flat down before his table there to gnaw bones like a dog?" The answer was that he was Pope Clement VI and that he had the spirit of the devil. Unfortunately there was no "noble King Dandalus." There was a Francesco Dandolo, of a patrician Venetian house, who was elected doge, not king, of Venice some eighteen years after the event to which the homilist referred. The Pope was not Clement VI but Clement V who reigned at Avignon from 1309 to 1314. Dandolo did appear before that Pope with a chain around his neck when he went as ambassador to Avignon to sue for peace. He did not have to appear in this condition and the phrase about the gnawing of bones is rhetorical nonsense to impress the simple. Dandolo was indulging in a bit of medieval extravagance which is not without parallel. At the fall of Calais at the start of the Hundred Years' War, Eustache de St. Pierre, one of the city's leading burghers, presented himself before Edward III of England in his shirt, barefoot and with a halter around his neck, to beg

mercy for the inhabitants of that city. In recounting the Dandolo incident Foxe was more careful. He mentioned that Dandolo was under no obligation to wear his chain, while the homilist did not.

Of course the Popess Joan is mentioned frequently, as she will continue to be as long as this type of literature is produced. Allegedly she was John VIII, who flourished in either the ninth, tenth, or eleventh centuries, came from England or Germany or both, and was rotten to the core. Even Bayle and Voltaire rejected this fable which would have been quite helpful to them in their attack on that "infamous thing," the Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from such propaganda, simmering English anti-Catholicism was often brought to a boil during these years by an alleged series of plots to bring about the death of the queen or king and the restoration of Catholicism. These plots became the main source of propaganda for the English government against Catholic Spain, then the leading power in Europe, the Catholic Church, and the Society of Jesus. By 1581 the government policy of repression was firmly in hand. Presence at Mass was punished by a fine and a year's imprisonment. Anyone over sixteen who was proved in court to have avoided Anglican services was fined twenty pounds a lunar month. To increase efficiency in the enforcement of these laws, informers were rewarded. Catholics, naturally, were restive under such legislation, which became increasingly harsh, and some were willing to take action. Actual plots resulted. The most famous, and still debated among historians, were the Ridolfi Plot of 1571

3. H. Thurston, *No Popery*, pp. 257-260 treats of the *Book of Martyrs*, the *Book of Homilies* and the "Popess Joan."

and Babington's Plot of 1586, which resulted in the execution of Mary Stuart. The plots named after Parry, Lopez, and Squire are usually discounted by competent historians. Yet it is necessary to recall that during these years the English lived in constant fear of a Spanish invasion, a fear not completely allayed by the defeat of the Armada. In such an atmosphere they were apparently ready to believe anything. How far these plots were the work of agents provocateurs of the English government or whether they resulted from Catholic resentment at the penal laws is a very involved question. That these influences at least were at work is clear. It is interesting to note that these plots were usually discovered at the right moment for the English government.<sup>4</sup>

One of the most famous of these plots was the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. James I, Mary Stuart's son, succeeded Elizabeth in 1603. While still James VI of Scotland, he had made remarks which led English Catholics to hope for better things upon his accession. According to the government's version, when such hopes were not realized certain wild spirits among the Catholics conceived the idea of blowing up the House of Parliament. This was to be done at the opening of Parliament when James, Henry, Prince of Wales, the great officers of state, and the Lords and Commons would be present to discuss the question of the union of England and Scotland, a project dear to the king's heart. After the flower of England had been blown sky-high there was to be a rising of the Catholics during which

4. These plots are described, in reference to their contemporary effect but not to their authenticity, in J. Neale's *Queen Elizabeth*, and in *The Cambridge Modern History*, Vols. 2 and 3, 1904 ed. M. Hume in *Treason and Plot* attacks the evidence on the Lopez and Squire plots. See also J. H. Pollen, *English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*.

either Prince Charles or the Princess Elizabeth, whichever was more available at the moment, was to be proclaimed the ruler of England. The man who was to fire the gunpowder was Guy Fawkes. He was taken on November 5, 1605, almost *flagrante delicto*, and the day was celebrated for many years thereafter as something of a Protestant holyday on which sermons were preached on Catholic treachery, bonfires were lit, effigies of the Pope burned, and children sang doggerel about the Pope, Fawkes, and the Church.<sup>5</sup>

After the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, the Titus Oates' Plot, the most sensational and least well founded of all the plots—if it had any basis at all—was revealed in September, 1678. It sprang from the twisted mind of an Anglican clergyman, Israel Tonge, and was exploited by another clergyman of most unsavory character, Titus Oates, and, among others, by Anthony Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury, who was an opponent of Charles II and of the heir presumptive, James, Duke of York, the king's Catholic brother. After a number of innocent people had been put to death Oates was exposed.<sup>6</sup> Charles II was succeeded by his brother in 1685. When James fled to France three years later as a result of the "Glorious Revolution," the Protestant succession was finally assured and the Whig families, the Cecils, the Coopers, the Cavendishes,

5. Among older works on the Gunpowder Plot are S. R. Gardiner's *What the Gunpowder Plot Was*, and J. Gerard, *What Was the Gunpowder Plot?* two rather polemical works. A contemporary Jesuit, another John Gerard, left a manuscript, which has been translated and edited by P. Caraman, *The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest*. H. R. Williamson's *Gunpowder Plot* is the most ingenious and recent account. Some of the trials of the participants in these plots are recorded in T. Howell, ed., *State Trials*.

6. Jane Lane, *Titus Oates*, is the latest account available. Arthur Bryant, in his *Charles II and his Samuel Pepys*, *The Years of Peril* covers the episode.



the Russells, could sleep easily in their beds. England was pretty much theirs.

These and other events and the almost constant propaganda of pulpit, press, and government, caused the average English or Scots Protestant of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to think of Catholics and their Church as avaricious, sacrilegious, perjured, dissolute, corrupt in doctrine, and depraved in morals. By and large, it was these same Englishmen and Scots who settled the original thirteen provinces of North America, bringing this tradition with them.

These immigrants and those who followed them varied in religious doctrine and practice. But, whether they were Anglicans, Congregationalists, Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, or Methodists, to name the major denominations, they had one conviction in common: with varying degrees of intensity they disliked the Catholic Church. The Pilgrims who settled Plymouth and the Puritans who founded Massachusetts Bay Colony and then fanned out all over that stern and rockbound coast were groups that regarded the Church of England as not wholly purified of Romish remnants. The Pilgrims' Confession of 1598, issued while they were in Holland, contains a long list of charges against the Anglican Church. Among other accusations they reproached the Anglican clergy for submitting themselves to "the Beast," Rome, and receiving his mark. This Confession was the basis of the Savoy Declaration of 1658, the official statement of the Congregationalists, which was adopted by a Massachusetts synod in 1680 and, as the Saybrook Platform, by Connecticut in 1708. In Rhode Island there was freedom of

religion but the inhabitants, mostly members of denominations to the left of Congregationalism, entertained the same ideas about Catholics as their officially intolerant neighbors. New York, while a cosmopolitan center almost from its foundation, was no exception to the general rule. The propaganda issued by Jacob Leisler and the utterances of that worthy and his followers at the time of his revolt in 1688 were violently anti-Catholic. During the so-called Negro Plot of 1741 the authorities hanged what was probably a nonjuring Anglican clergyman under the impression that he was a Catholic priest. The citizens were convinced of the existence of a Papist-Negro-French-Indian conspiracy. In Pennsylvania Catholics escaped persecution but not suspicion. In Maryland, where a number of Catholics had settled, the Calverts had trouble with the Puritans. After the Revolution of 1688 a penal code so drastic was enacted that it was disallowed by the government in London. Anglican Virginia was as hostile to Catholics as Congregationalist Massachusetts. Among other restrictions Catholics were forbidden to bear arms and to own a horse worth more than five pounds. Catholics were not welcome in the Carolinas or Georgia.

This anti-Catholic tradition was kept very much alive by the Protestant clergy. The Anglican Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts and its ministers in the provinces continually exploited the prejudices of their congregations. In fact the Society was founded to ensure that "His Majesty's subjects would not be seduced to the Popish religion." The famous Methodist preacher, George Whitefield, warned his hearers of whole swarms of priests who, locustlike, would overrun the colonies.

The Congregationalist and Presbyterian divines were even

stronger. Hating not only the Papacy but bishops as well, they accused the Anglicans of trying to introduce Catholicism into the provinces by setting up bishoprics. According to the Reverend Charles Chauncy the Catholic Church was "a foul and contaminated channel." The Reverend Samuel Cooper, popularly known as "Silvertongued Sam," scored a triumph at Harvard with his Dudleian Lecture of 1773 on the Pope, entitled "The Man of Sin." The Reverend Jonathan Mayhew denounced both the Anglican and Catholic Churches but informed his hearers in his celebrated "Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance" that the Catholic Church was the guiltier of the two. "As the mother of harlots" she was the cause of the sins of the Anglicans. Samuel Davies, a well known "New Light" Presbyterian minister, urged his hearers to guard their religion "against ignorance, superstition, idolatry, tyranny over conscience, Massacre, Fire, Sword and all the mischiefs beyond expression with which Popery is pregnant."

The campaign was also carried on in the schools. A popular text was *The Protestant Tutor* of Benjamin Harris who had been connected with Titus Oates and his plot. The purpose of this book was to instruct children to read and spell English, to ground them in the true Protestant religion, and to discover "the errors and deceits of the Papists." Among other items, *The New England Primer*, the first edition of which was also compiled by Harris, contained the following:

Abhor the arrant Whore of Rome  
And all her blasphemies;  
And drink not of her cursed cup  
Obey not her decrees.

At Harvard the third Dudleian Lecture was devoted to the detecting, convicting, and exposing of "the idolatry of the Roman Church, their tyranny, usurpations, damnable heresies, fatal errors, abominable superstitions, and other crying wickednesses in their high places and finally that the Church of Rome is that mystical Babylon, that Man of Sin, that apostate Church spoken of in the New Testament." For about two centuries the more celebrated Congregationalist and Unitarian ministers devoted themselves to this congenial task. The same was true at Yale. At the "New Light" Presbyterian College of New Jersey, later Princeton University, the trustees were required to take an oath to support the Act of 25 Charles II "for preventing dangers from Popish recusants." The second president of the institution, Aaron Burr, Sr., was of the opinion that the French and Indian War was "the last effort of the Man of Sin . . . one of the most desperate attacks he has ever made on the Reformed Churches." William and Mary and King's College (later Columbia University) were administered by Anglicans. Brown was a Baptist foundation and Dartmouth, originally founded as a school for Indians, was under Congregational control. It is not likely that the clerical presidents of these denominational schools restrained their rhetoric when they spoke of the Catholic Church.

Besides appearing in sermons and religious works this animus overflowed into other types of literature. The ubiquitous almanac was used. Doggerel such as:

Gunpowder Plot—We han't forgot.

and

Ere you pretend to burn the Pope  
Secure the Papists with a rope

are examples from Ames's *Astronomical Diary* for 1735 and 1737. John Tully's *Almanac* for 1694, in the course of some unflattering lines on Louis XIV remarks,

The Tyrant with the Church's Rod  
Murdered the Protestants to please his God.

Ballads, usually published as broadsides, were composed on various occasions. At the time of the New England expedition against Louisbourg in 1758, one such ballad ended with the devout wish,

And may some kind, propitious stars  
Assist you on the field of Mars,  
And Heaven crown our righteous wars  
To Papists utter ruin.

An elegy published on the death of Governor John Winthrop complained that

Death like a murdering Jesuite  
Hath robb'd us of our hearts' delight.

Works issued from Colonial presses with such titles as "A Master-Key to Popery," "The French Convert"; "Popish Cruelty Displayed" was in its thirtieth edition by 1753. Newssheets and the early American magazines carried unpleasant communications to the editor, such anecdotes and articles as those entitled "A Caution Against Jesuitical Conversion," "The Difference Between Popery and Protestantism," "The Nation Awakened at the Dangers of Popery."

The Quebec Act of 1774 brought on an avalanche of anti-Catholic propaganda. This act extended the boundaries of Canada to the Ohio River on the south and the Mississippi on the west. This vast territory was to be governed by a governor

and council appointed by the Crown, the Civil Law was confirmed, and Catholics were granted the free exercise of their religion. The act would prevent the westward extension of the thirteen provinces, discourage immigration into the region by those accustomed to some measure of self-government and traditional English legal procedures, and dampen the hopes of men interested in land speculation. The act was passed toward the end of the long controversy over the erection of an Anglican bishopric in North America, a project bitterly attacked by the various dissenting sects who constituted the great majority of the inhabitants. It was interpreted by many of the provincials as an attempt by England to use "Popish slaves," the Canadians, as her tools in establishing episcopacy and royal absolutism throughout the entire continent. Broad­sides were issued, engravings made, ballads written against it. An illustration in the *Royal American Magazine* showed the devil, the Pope, and George III scheming together. A puppet show put on in Charleston, S.C., displayed the devil prodding the Pope who prodded George Grenville who prodded Lord North and all bowed low when the king's men went by. The *New York Journal* for Nov. 3, 1774, stated that General Carleton was going to employ 30,000 Catholic Canadians as militiamen. A notice appeared in the *Boston Evening Post*, "London, July 5. It is reported that the Pope has been solicited to publish a crusade against the rebellious Bostonians, to excite the Canadians, with assistance of the British soldiery, to extirpate these bitter enemies of the Romish religion and monarchical power." One calling himself Bob Jingle, Esq. was moved to write,

Shall George the Third presume to give  
To Provinces their bounds?

And to our very noses bring  
The Whore of Bab'lon, Zounds!

A writer in the *Royal American Magazine* expressed concern that the Quebec Act would be the forerunner of an era of persecution like that of Queen Mary the Bloody. He stated that in a dream he had felt all the pains of the martyrs at Smithfield. At last, still in his dream, he had penetrated the royal household where he encountered four Anglican bishops dancing a minuet around and crossing their hands over the Quebec Act, which was on the floor. Around them the other bishops sat in pontifical dignity. The dance, he explained, was to confirm and sanctify the bill and to show their approbation of the Roman religion. Paul Revere embellished this rather heavy-handed bit of humor with a print, in which the devil is depicted hovering over the bishops' heads. The Reverend Mr. Holly, preaching at Suffield, Mass., warned his hearers that, if Great Britain were successful in binding the colonies in secular chains, the various acts of Parliament which led up to the American Revolution, "then perhaps our religious privileges and liberties will be called for next, and in lieu thereof Popery enjoined. But woe to the colonies, woe to New England, if this should ever come to pass! And who can say we are out of danger? Not only to have the temporal property at the disposal of arbitrary power, but conscience bound by papal chains which, when thoroughly fashioned upon us, away must go our bibles, and in lieu thereof we must have imposed on us the superstitions and damnable heresies and idolatries of Rome." He foresaw the establishment of the Inquisition in New England with torture and the stake for all good Congregationalists. All this anti-Catholic agitation

reacted strongly when Congress asked Canadian support for the patriot cause.

There was considerable anti-Catholic feeling during the first two years of the American Revolution. It showed itself in the frequent assertions of a connection between papal and royal tyranny and caused considerable concern to the American leaders trying to secure the aid of Canada, France, and Spain. When the Continental Army outside Boston planned to celebrate Guy Fawkes's Day in 1775, George Washington issued an order prohibiting it. With the French Alliance of 1778 this anti-Catholic attitude shifted abruptly. Father (later Archbishop) Carroll, on a visit to Boston, wrote: "It is wonderful to tell what great civilities have been done to me in this town where a few years ago a popish priest was thought to be the greatest monster in creation." However, it would take more than the French Alliance, the Declaration of Independence, and the presence of so many French Catholic military personnel, obviously without horns, to change the stereotype of the Catholic Church and Catholics entertained by the majority of non-Catholic Americans.

An indication of the depth of this feeling are the provisions discriminating against Catholics in the constitutions adopted by the states after they had declared themselves independent of England. The New Jersey, North Carolina, and Georgia constitutions barred Catholics from state office. Connecticut, which retained its colonial charter, continued its restrictions on Catholics. New York limited the franchise to those who took an oath that they owed no allegiance to any foreign power or potentate in matters civil or ecclesiastical. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and South Carolina specified that office-



holders were to be Protestants. The first state admitted into the Union after the Revolution in 1791, Vermont, required office-holders to take an oath that they professed the Protestant religion. The Federal Constitution of 1787 remained free from such tendencies and the first amendment, which forbade the making of any "law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," helped to discourage bigotry. In addition, during the Federal period of United States history there was little immigration, the country was prosperous, its inhabitants were busily engaged in developing the country, and there were only about thirty thousand Catholics resident in the United States. During these years most of the states revised their constitutions and the anti-Catholic provisions were removed.<sup>7</sup>

By about 1820 immigration began to increase. Many of the new arrivals were Catholic Irish who found work in the New England factories and on the various internal improvement projects then under way. While these immigrants were welcomed by some for pragmatic reasons, hostility against them grew steadily among a far larger number of the native-born, especially those in the cities along the eastern seaboard where many of the immigrants arrived either sick or destitute or both.<sup>8</sup> This situation was aggravated by the importation of many anti-Catholic books and pamphlets from England, where

7. The standard work on this period is Sister Mary Augustina Ray, *American Opinion of Roman Catholicism in the 18th Century*, from which most of the contemporary citations have been taken. See also C. Metzger, *The Quebec Act*, P. Guilday, *The Life and Times of John Carroll*, and Ellen Hart, *Charles Carroll of Carrollton*.

8. On immigration and the problems it raised in general see M. Hansen, *Atlantic Migration and The Immigrant in American History* and O. Handlin, *The Uprooted and Race and Nationality in American Life*.

the introduction and passage of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829 had caused an outbreak of Protestant feeling. These books enjoyed great popularity in the United States and encouraged American writers in search of a financially rewarding subject to imitate them. A new wave of anti-Catholicism in the United States was in the making.

This nativist sentiment was given unity, aim, and expression in *The Protestant*, a newspaper founded in New York in 1830 by a group of clergymen and laymen, with the Reverend George Bourne as editor. The editor's policy consisted of aggressive denunciation of the Catholic Church. A typical issue contained articles on "Code of the Jesuits," "A Canadian Papist Converted," "Bigotry and Persecution," "Monkish Legends," and "Popery Characterised." Bourne's violence was self-defeating and he was removed as editor. He was succeeded by the Reverend William Brownlee who proved equally unbalanced. The name of the paper was changed to *The Reformation Advocate* and it was followed in 1833 by a monthly, *The Protestant Magazine*. The owners of this publication also issued another magazine, a weekly, *The Anti-Romanist*.

The New York Protestant Association, founded in 1831 and reactivated by the Reverend Brownlee in the following year, sponsored monthly meetings to discuss the character of Popery. The subject examined at the first meeting was, "Is Popery that Bablyon the Great which John the Evangelist has described in the Apocalypse?" The lectures proved so popular that they became biweekly and additional gatherings were held in other parts of New York City and Brooklyn. In 1835 the still agitated question, "Is Popery Compatible with Civil Liberty?" was aired. This meeting ended in a riot. A marked increase in anti-

Catholic sermons was noted and many variations were played on the theme of Catholic immorality. Books appeared like Scippio de Ricci's *Female Convents. Secrets of Nunneries Disclosed*, in which priests were described as immoral seducers of nuns. There were tales of secret passageways connecting rectories and convents with babies' bodies strewn about the cellars of both or dropped down convenient wells. The popularity of such literature, apart from its anti-Catholicism, can also be attributed to the spirit of the age. The heavy hand of evangelical piety lay over the land. Anti-Catholic publications, like a number of those directed against slavery and alcoholic beverages, were a way of having your cake and eating it. The reader, in good conscience, could enjoy that exaltation which is peculiar to the exercise of that most dangerous of virtues, righteous indignation, while still experiencing the less noble sensations aroused by obscenity. In addition, this was the age of Poe when the macabre became a dominant theme in literature, art, and even architecture. The Gothic Revival was taking place and many Americans were living in houses which attempted in their intricacy, darkness, and general oddity to rival Mrs. Radcliffe's Castle of Udolpho or the House of Usher.

Against this background the preaching of inflammatory anti-Catholic sermons in Boston by the Reverend Lyman Beecher, father of Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, resulted in the burning of the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in the early hours of August 12, 1834. There were sporadic burnings of churches in the forties and fifties, the most notable being the burning of St. Michael's and St. Augustine's churches in Philadelphia in May, 1844. Only the determined action of Bishop John Hughes

prevented similar riots in New York. He declared that if a "single Catholic Church were burned in New York, the city would become a second Moscow." The Catholics in Philadelphia, he said, should have defended their churches since the authorities would not or could not help them. The news of the riots in Philadelphia moved the nativists in New York to action. A mass meeting was held on the night of May 7 where, after much denunciation of Catholics, a call was issued for an enormous mass meeting in Central Park on May 9. Informed by his legal advisers that state law did not require the city to compensate Catholics for churches destroyed by mobs, the bishop concluded that Catholics must protect their own property. Since the mayor of the city at that time was James Harper, the president of the publishing house and a well known Nativist, no help could be expected from him. So the bishop stationed armed men about the various churches and published a special edition of the *Freeman's Journal*, warning his guards to keep the peace as long as possible but to defend the churches at all costs. This prompt action discouraged the Nativists and their meeting was called off.

In 1835 a book appeared entitled *Six Months in a Convent* by Rebecca Theresa Reed which was widely praised by the press and had a tremendous sale. This is the more remarkable because it was rather unexciting. However, its supplement was more lurid. The *pièce de résistance* of this type of literature was Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures of the Hôtel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal* published in 1836. This unfortunate woman, who as a child had run a slate pencil into her head, was exploited by a group of ministers active in the anti-Catholic crusade, the Reverend J. J. Slocum, who seems to have written the book,

the Reverend George Bourne, quondam editor of *The Protestant*, and the Reverend William Hoyt, who had first taken up with her. Harper Brothers was offered the manuscript. Being chary of publishing such a scurrilous work, the firm had two employees set up a dummy company, thereby sharing in the profits without running the risk of opprobrium. Maria Monk was soon joined by another escapee from the Hôtel Dieu Convent who called herself by the strange name Saint Frances Patrick. This woman said she had been in the convent with Maria Monk and offered to confirm all her charges. The two were brought together at a public meeting. After embracing and shedding copious tears, they talked for some time of life in the convent in which they had never been. Saint Frances Patrick was soon exposed as a fraud but Maria Monk's public remained faithful to her for several years. Then even they had to face a fact or two. Having picked the pockets of the man she was entertaining at the moment, she was taken to prison where she died in 1849. While all this was pure poppycock, Maria Monk's career demonstrated both the financial rewards that could accrue from such performances and the value of sensational propaganda against the Catholic Church. The ex-nun lecturing on the horrors of convent life in lyceums all over the country became, like the show boat and the traveling circus, something of a fixture on the American landscape.

In 1834 a work appeared by a man who is remembered both as the inventor of the telegraph and a portrait painter of talent, Samuel F. B. Morse. This was his *A Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the Untied States*. Morse was the son of the Reverend Jedidiah Morse, who also had discovered a foreign conspiracy against the liberties of the United States. His con-

spirators had been the Bavarian Illuminati who were behind the Republican Party of Thomas Jefferson. In his youth Morse had been attracted by the aesthetic side of Catholicism, but, he said, he turned against the Church because a soldier knocked off his hat in Rome when he was watching a religious procession pass through the streets.

On returning to the United States Morse learned of the Leopold Association from attacks made on it in the Protestant press. This Association had been founded in Austria to help the struggling Catholic churches in America through prayer and financial aid. Morse felt that his European experiences fitted him to speak with authority on this Austrian, monarchical, Catholic agency. He wrote a series of twelve letters to the New York *Observer* which were widely reprinted in other papers and then published as a book. In this work, *A Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States*, Morse linked immigration, already a source of irritation, to Catholicism and made both equally obnoxious to Americans, thus causing a double animus to fall on the Catholic Church in the United States. Not only was the Church "Babylon the Great" but it was also the Church of the immigrant who caused municipalities to spend money because he was sick or poor, who reduced the standard of living of the American workman because he was willing to work for low wages, who supported the city machines with all their corruption, who conspired against the Constitution of the United States, and who did not observe the Sabbath with all due decorum.<sup>9</sup>

The Nativists organized politically. Their party, the Ameri-

9. R. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860*, takes up where Sister Augustina's work ended. C. Mabie's *The American Leonorato* is a biography of Morse. See also P. Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England*.

can Republican, carried the municipal elections in New York and Philadelphia in 1844 and expanded so rapidly that a national convention was called to meet in Philadelphia in 1845. At this convention the party took the name Native American Party. Its success in certain localities was not matched on the national scene. Such questions as the annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico caused interest in Nativism to decline, but anti-Catholicism and hostility to the immigrant revived in the fifties. A secret society was founded in New York in 1849, the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner. In 1851, while it still had only thirty members, it was joined by a wealthy merchant, James W. Barker, a man with a flair for organization and promotion. By 1852 thousands were enrolled. Its members were pledged to vote only for native-born, non-Catholic candidates, to agitate for a twenty-one-year probationary period before awarding citizenship, and to combat the Catholic Church. When a Democrat, General Franklin Pierce, was elected President in 1852, many a Whig attributed his election to the votes of recent immigrants and joined the Order. The society also had the charm of secrecy, which has always fascinated Americans; there were two degrees of membership, an elaborate ritual involving red and white hearts, and members were taught a peculiar cry of distress to be emitted whenever they were in danger from you know who. When questioned about their society they were to reply "I know nothing" and they were called popularly the Know Nothings. In 1854 the Order came out in the open, nominated slates of candidates, carried Massachusetts, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, and sent 75 Know-Nothing congressmen to Washington. In 1855 the society carried Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland, and Kentucky. The Know

Nothings had great hopes of carrying the country in 1856 but its members split hopelessly over the slavery question and faded away rapidly.

During the Civil War the citizens of the United States had other preoccupations besides an imaginary papal invasion and Catholics were welcomed in both the Union and Confederate armies. The Catholicism of John H. Surrat, Jr., his mother, and one or two of the other conspirators active in the plot to kill Lincoln caused some rumblings and this fact was later used by anti-Catholic agitators.<sup>10</sup> But the war, reconstruction, and the general rush to exploit the West, either by going to that region or to Wall Street, consumed the energies of Americans.

Organized anti-Catholicism reappeared in 1887 when Henry F. Bowers, a lawyer in Clinton, Iowa, established the American Patriotic Association, better known as the A.P.A. By 1893 it had spread to twenty states. Like the period preceding the Civil War, the late eighties and nineties of the nineteenth century were years of unrest. The Western farmer felt wronged and expressed his feelings in the Populist Movement. There were panic in 1893 and depression. Social and economic unrest led to a loosening of party ties, since men felt that the older organizations had little to offer them. Many joined the A.P.A. and many more followed when some municipal victories seemed to foreshadow even greater political success. The celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus in 1892 saw many parades and meetings under Catholic auspices which the American Protestant considered to be menacing exhibitions of Catholic strength. The following year Monsignor, later Cardinal, Satolli came to the

10. T. Roscoe's *Web of Conspiracy* gathers together what is known about the death of Lincoln.



United States as the first Apostolic Delegate. He took up residence in Washington, a fact that could be made to frighten people already disposed to believe the worst, and gave lectures in various cities on such controversial matters as the parochial school system. The members of the A.P.A. regarded Satolli as the head of a great Catholic lobby that intended to subvert the American government. Representatives of the society disseminated forged documents of which the two most notable were "Instructions to Catholics" and an encyclical supposed to have been written by Leo XIII. The former bore the forged signatures of eight members of the American hierarchy and was composed of a number of spurious canons, one of which repeated the old canard about Catholics having no need to keep faith with heretics. In the forged encyclical the Pope announced that on or about September 5, 1893, when a Catholic congress was to meet in Chicago, he would absolve all Catholics from their allegiance to the United States and, on or about the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola, July 31, he would impose an obligation on all American Catholics to exterminate all the heretics within the boundaries of the United States.

From 1893 to 1895 the A.P.A. maneuvered to get control of the machinery of the Republican Party with some success on local levels. It was a secret society and its members took an oath that they would wage continual battle against the Catholic Church, hire and vote only for Protestants. Unlike the Know Nothings, the A.P.A. welcomed foreign-born Protestants as members. The organization sponsored lectures by ex-priests and ex-nuns. One of the more celebrated of the latter was a woman named Margaret Shepherd whose book, *My Life in a Convent*, was a tissue of lies. She had never belonged to a religious order

and had a police record. Another tactic of the A.P.A. was to insist that the cellars of Catholic churches were arsenals in which were stored the arms necessary to carry out Leo XIII's order. The society tried to control the Republican nomination in 1896 and fought the nomination of William McKinley. Its discomfiture at the St. Louis convention showed that its strength was not all its leaders claimed. Many who had joined it for political reasons left and the A.P.A. deteriorated. However, the sacred fire was kept alive by such societies as the Guardians of Liberty, the Covenanters, and the Knights of Luther and by newspapers like *The Menace*, which claimed a circulation above 1,400,000 in 1914.<sup>11</sup>

While anti-Catholic prejudice died down during World War I, as it had during the Civil War, the organization which, in the decade of the twenties, would do the most to carry on the centuries-old crusade was already founded. On Thanksgiving Day, 1915, on the top of Stone Mountain near Atlanta, Georgia, the Invisible Empire of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan came into being. A handful of hooded men swore an oath of fealty to William J. Simmons, the first Emperor and Imperial Wizard, as a fiery cross illuminated the scene. Between 1915 and 1920 the Emperor had at the most five thousand subjects, chiefly residents of Georgia. The Klan started to expand when Simmons signed a contract with a fund raiser and publicity man of Atlanta, Edward Clarke. Simmons was to be the sole ruler of the Empire but Clarke was to have a free and quite profitable hand in building up the membership. Out of each ten-dollar initiation fee Clarke was to receive eight. So efficient was Clarke that his profit has been estimated at forty thousand dollars a

11. M. Williams' *The Shadow of the Pope* discusses both the A.P.A. movement and the Ku Klux Klan. See also J. M. Mecklin, *The Ku Klux Klan*.

month between 1920 and 1923. He also appears to have had an interest in the company that manufactured the white regalia the Klan members purchased. Despite Simmons' disclaimers, which apparently were sincere on his part, the order concentrated on three things, anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy.

It is well to remember that at this time Georgia was represented in the United States Senate by an anti-Catholic demagogue, Thomas Watson, that it led all the other states of the Union in the number of lynchings of Negroes, and that it had recently been the scene of anti-Jewish outbursts in connection with the death of a young woman factory worker. Whatever idealism there was in this generally sordid movement seems to have stemmed from its sincere, if misguided, Fundamentalist Protestant members who were alarmed not only at the menace of Catholicism and the influence of Jews, but also at the growing liberalism of American Protestantism. These were the old-fashioned Protestants of the South and Middle West, the dwellers in the Bible and hookworm belts so pitilessly pilloried by H. L. Mencken.

In 1922 Simmons resigned as head of the Klan and Hiram Evans, a Dallas, Texas, dentist, became Imperial Wizard. In 1924 it had an estimated membership of 4,500,000 and was strong in Indiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Oregon, California, and New York. Other states had estimated memberships of from 200,000 to 500,000. In that year, 1924, it practically deadlocked the Democratic convention and was able to force such a powerful man as Senator Oscar Underwood of Alabama into retirement because he had opposed it.

With Al Smith's nomination for the Presidency in 1928, the

Klansmen and many others engaged in a tremendous anti-Catholic campaign. William Lloyd Clark, owner of the Rail Splitter Press of Milan, Illinois, and a professional anti-Catholic, sent out thousands of copies of a message that began, "Smith wins at Houston. . . . In a convention ruled by political Romanism anti-Christ has won and a product of the Bowery of New York City, the Confessional Box, the parochial school, and Tammany Hall has been nominated as a candidate for President of the United States. . . . An uncultured Papal product. . . ." After more of this type of abuse he urged everyone to buy the July *Rail Splitter* and two pamphlets from his press, "Al Smith in the White House" and "The Menace of Al Smith." Anti-Catholic and anti-Smith papers such as *The Fellowship Forum*, the *New Menace*, *The Protestant*, and *The Lash* sold between three and five million copies weekly. Apparently endless chain letter writing systems spread the old, obscene canards and other anti-Catholic propaganda. While Smith's defeat in 1928 has been rightly attributed to other causes, it can safely be said that his religion was one of the main factors in his defeat.

Anti-Catholicism in the United States has been described as a fever, first brought over in the ships that crossed the Atlantic in the seventeenth century, which became endemic in the United States and which, on occasion, becomes epidemic. Such occasions have been the times of the French wars in the eighteenth century, the years just before the American Revolution, the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century when the Nativist movement was in full force, the fifties when the "Know Nothings" were in their heyday, the nineties when the A.P.A. was active, and the second decade of the twentieth century when the Klan was night-riding. During such outbursts all the old

tales were retold, the old grievances, real or fancied, gone into, and the ash-covered but smouldering embers of hatred set aflame. The tradition is deeply rooted and, though at times men of goodwill have hoped that the image of the Catholic held by many Protestants has been broken, it is only reasonable to expect that its eradication will be a very difficult matter. To make an oblique reference to the current political scene, there is an old adage that one swallow does not make a summer.



# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND POLITICS

Gustav Weigel, S.J.

THE word "politics," in its Greek roots, merely means the concern or the activity of those in charge of the administration of a sovereign civic community. These administrators are directing their community to what we call the common good: order and prosperity. Order means the peaceful collaboration of the citizens of the community, with the greatest amount of liberty possible for each individual, given the limitations of living in a fellowship. There are different views regarding the necessity of such a community, but philosophers by and large are of the opinion that it is inevitable and necessary that we have a political community. When we translate "political" into Latin, its meaning becomes "civic." A civic community is made up of individuals and these individuals themselves can form different

groups. Let us take, for example, a squash club. A number of people join together in order to promote their interest in squash. This is a society. But it is not the only societal arrangement that will make their city itself a decent place to live in. There must be an ultimate form whereby all the individuals living in that particular area will produce, in the interest of their own defense, order and prosperity, something which we call the "state." The city itself need not be a state. It belongs to a larger community, which is the community of the United States, and that community is bound together by the state. This is the last social form that individuals grouped together will adopt in order to make the whole community, as far as it is possible, self-sufficient and productive of the ordered life necessary for the attainment of prosperity. The state is the highest form of societal bond that we know from direct observation of reality and events. No higher societal bond can be found by natural man. He will need this type of bond provided he is stable in his residence. Nomads do not need a state. If, however, stable residence is part of the life of the individuals of the group, they will need a state to bind and keep them together, each for his own advantage and for the advantage of all.

In this country, the state form is what we call the Constitution of the United States. This Constitution uses the government as instrument. The government is not the same as the state. The state is the people, inasmuch as that people is organized ultimately to produce, for all, order and prosperity. The way in which this organization takes place will be expressed by a constitution, written or unwritten. This constitution will then produce a government according to the limitations and direction given by the written or unwritten constitution. Such a state con-



siders itself superior to all other societal forms within the commonwealth—the Republic, as we call it.

The problem now arises—what about the religious fellowships which are also elements in the total social life of such a civic community? To this question different answers have been given in the course of history. We see one answer exemplified in the ancient kingdom of Israel—or the two kingdoms—Israel and then Judah. In this particular society it was taken for granted that the true power was not in the king, but in God Himself. God was the king of Israel. There were indeed human kings, but these human kings had the obligation of directing the destiny of Israel according to the will of God. The will of God manifested itself in two ways. First of all there was the law which the Israelites themselves had accepted at Sinai. This was the basic constitution of ancient Israel. God also spoke to the people through the prophets and the prophets would have messages for the king. The king, in the constitution of Israel, was to fulfill the command given by God. This was the theory of the people of Israel before they were dispersed among the nations through the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests. We call this type of church-state relationship theocracy—the rule of God. The whole function of government here is to fulfill the will of God as manifested in a special form of revelation.

We have a later example of such a theory in the community in Geneva and Switzerland during the lifetime of John Calvin. The magistrates of Geneva who had the power to direct the secular life of the people were nevertheless under the command of God and had to direct the community by God's law. This law was made manifest by the Scriptures and the interpretation of the church community acting through a central committee.

Another answer has been what is called Caesaro-papism—when Caesar himself demands the rights belonging to the Church. In this situation the king is not only the head of the government, whose decrees make possible the production of the goods required for the community according to its constitution, but is also the head of the religious fellowship recognized in that community. Therefore the same individual who is the head of the secular government and who is trying to achieve the secular good of the community is also the religious arbiter who rules not only the citizens as citizens, but also the citizens as believers. History has seen examples of this. The clearest was the Roman Empire. Caesar was not only the secular king of the Roman commonwealth, he was also the pontiff, the supreme priest, and consequently he had total control of all the religious activities within the Empire. It was precisely on this point that difficulties arose between the Christians and the Romans. The Christians refused to recognize in Caesar the right to direct them religiously, insisting that they received their direction elsewhere. This Caesar could not accept. Because he could not accept it, he declared the Christians to be outlaws and therefore subject to the laws of outlawry.

These were two different ancient systems in which the relationship of the religious fellowship with the civic community was arranged. Today we do not like either of those forms. We do not want a theocracy, a church dictating to the secular rulers of a secular community, and we do not want a secular prince or a secular king or dictator explaining what must be done by the members of a religious fellowship.

Since the eighteenth century another system has been worked out, the system called the separation of church and state. Ac-

cording to this system, the state is omnipotent and autonomous in arranging the secular affairs of its community. Within that particular framework any religious fellowship could work in its own way with freedom. The religious fellowship could make no demands upon the state; the state could make no demands on it. The question that is often raised, however, is whether or not the Catholic Church accepts this separation of church and state. This is precisely the charge that has been leveled against Catholics since the founding of the republic. As non-Catholics understood it, the Catholic Church necessarily stood for theocracy. Secular magistrates, princes, and governors would be subject to the command of the Catholic Church. Therefore wherever the Catholic Church was present, at least in numbers large enough to have impact upon the total secular community, the Catholic Church would ultimately command and, of course, destroy the freedom of other forms of religious union and fellowship. This is the question we would now like to discuss.

Does the Catholic Church necessarily suppose a theocracy in the constitution of the civic secular commonwealth? One could, of course, bring evidence to bear that such indeed is the Catholic theory. These evidences usually are derived from the practice and law of the Middle Ages. In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII, in his quarrel with Philip the Fair of France, said, "The powers [which he calls the sword] necessary to rule this world were given to Peter who said 'Behold we have two swords.'" Boniface tells us that one sword was the sword of spiritual power and declares that this sword is used exclusively by the bishops of the Church. The other power or sword was that of secular power which belonged as much to the Church as did the spiritual power, but for its *use* it was handed over to the secular

princes and generals who were to use it according to the pleasure and command of the bishop. I quote almost verbatim from the Bull written by Boniface VIII in 1301 or 1302.

The question is: does this represent the Catholic theory of the relationships between church and state? The answer, of course, is no. Did the Pope therefore make a mistake? Again the answer is no. The creation of the new nations in Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire was the work of the Church. There was no other power in existence which could produce a secular union among the different peoples at that time. The Church, under the necessity of that emergency, produced the new state. This new state was called the Christian Republic. It was not merely a question of the French kingdom or the Spanish kingdom or the Italian kingdom, it was a united Christendom. It was formed by the Church for the purposes of the Church. By its constitution therefore, a constitution freely made, the secular community was to serve the Church. The basic law of the secular community was that to be a citizen you had to be a Christian and a Catholic. Boniface VIII is therefore voicing the principle that he is using. It is not a theological one. He is using the constitutional principle of Christendom. The irony of it was that, at the very moment when he was appealing to the unwritten constitution of Christendom, it was already ceasing to exist. Nations and states were being formed to replace the united republic of Christendom.

Hence it is necessary to approach the problem, as far as it concerns the Catholic, from a theological point of view. It is true to say that from the thirteenth century until 1962, theologians have been at work on the proper Catholic formulation of the relationships between church and state. The work is not yet

finished. It may never be finished because there is a variable factor in this relationship. The variable factor is not the Church, but the state. The organization of the state in the course of history has not been uniform. Different statal arrangements take place according to the needs of the time and place. If we think of a sovereign people in Africa living in a primitive culture, we will have trouble in determining whether this is a state, or if it is a state, what is its form. Especially today we have a new problem. Is the ancient division of sovereignty even workable? Can any community in our time consider itself self-sufficient? Or do they not all form parts of a world community where one part is influenced by and is dependent upon the other? The whole notion of state, therefore, is undergoing constant evolution. To solve this problem we must go to the political philosophers and to the sociologists, not to the theologians. The theologian can only discuss the relationships of church to state if one can define for him what kind of state is meant. However, in spite of evolution of doctrine, in spite of the constant modification of the doctrine by reason of historic evolution, there are yet principles that Catholics can put down as absolute. Let us discuss those principles now.

The first principle is this: The Church is a society in the supernatural order, in the sacral order, in the order of man's ultimate relationship to God. It exists precisely to connect and associate man with the ultimate, the object of his inward desire and hunger, and so is ultimate. One cannot appeal to anything higher, for it is the last and the highest. It is the faith of the Catholic that the fellowship called the Church was constructed for and structured by God Himself through the effort of His Son and Prophet Jesus Christ. The Church therefore, according

to Catholic belief, is not something that man can freely accept or reject, nor something that he can freely construct and reconstruct. The Church has its basic structure and is needed if man is to achieve the ultimate. Hence it is something essential in the order of man's ultimate concern. It is ultimate and superior because God is ultimate and superior. The superiority of the Church will therefore be the superiority that exists between the ultimate and the proximate, between the last and the intermediate. On this principle the Church is inflexible. This inflexibility, however, is not at all singular to Catholicism. All through history, wherever we find human beings we also find disobedience to the secular community justified on the grounds that God has commanded something else. Perhaps the best known instance in the whole history of Western literature is the case of Socrates. Ordered by the court in Athens to stop teaching the young men of Athens because his doctrine was atheistic, Socrates could have been acquitted if he promised to stop. He refused. He told his judges flatly that within him there was a daimon. Shall we call it the voice of conscience? It is not too clear precisely what this daimon was. But one thing is clear. Socrates conceived that daimon to be the voice of the deity and hence ultimate. All that he could do as a man was to obey it. If that obedience brought with it disobedience to the secular community, in which he also firmly believed, then he must disobey the secular community in order to obey the voice of deity. Certainly all of the West has always considered Socrates a noble man precisely because of his defiance of the Athenian commonwealth.

Let us consider another example. In the Acts of the Apostles, after the apostles Peter and John had performed a miracle they

were brought before the Sanhedrin, the highest power within the Jewish community, although subject indeed to supervision by the Roman government. The Sanhedrin had decided that Christianity was a disturbing influence within Palestine and therefore wanted the Jews to have no part in it. They ordered Peter and John to stop preaching this doctrine. Peter answered, "If it is better to obey God or to obey you, you judge." He appealed to the same principle as did Socrates.

This particular view is usually expressed in what is called the inviolability of conscience, something very much praised, admired, and stressed, especially within the Protestant tradition. No man or group of men or human authority can touch the conscience of an individual. No law made by secular power is valid which contradicts and overrules the voice of conscience. Within the Protestant tradition this is always conceded to be noble and right. The Catholic doctrine is precisely the same. The will of God cannot be overridden by anything human. When there is question of following the secular goal with its secular implementation or the sacral goal with sacral implementation, if these be in conflict, man's obligation is to follow the sacral goal. His obedience will be to the sacral and if this is communicated to him through a fellowship, through a society, he will follow that society rather than the secular society which has secular power in the community. On this first principle then we find that there is really no great difference between the position of the Catholic and the position of the Protestant.

The second principle makes it quite clear that the Catholic Church does not consider that the proper relationship between the secular commonwealth and the religious fellowship should be one of theocracy. The state is autonomous and naturally

equipped for all things necessary in the secular order. If that be true, then it necessarily follows that within the secular order of concern, the state does not have to consult any religious fellowship. If it wishes to do so, it must do so for a secular good, the good of this life, the good life of man on earth. Not only does it not have to consult a religious fellowship, but also it itself has, within its own power, all that is needed to implement its own search for the common good, which is order and prosperity. The state as state is by no means subordinated to the Church as church. These are two societies constituted in the one historical moment. One society, the Church, is not a necessary society at all. In itself it is the fruit of divine graciousness. The state is necessary by the very structure of man. These two fellowships may coexist simultaneously in the same people, in the same nation. They are related as two societies. One society, the Church, is dynamized by its search for the ultimate and the sacral. The other society is dynamized by its search for temporal and secular well-being. They have different goals. Having different goals and different implements to achieve their goals, there can be no conflict in the absolute, abstract order. The minute we introduce the notion of conflict, we no longer have a comparison of church and state. We are dealing with two orders. We have the order of the secular in contrast to the order of the sacral. The sacral moves toward the ultimate goal, which is supreme, beyond which we can make no appeal. The secular searches for the good life in historical human terms. This goal is not supreme by reason of its own meaning. It is obviously something less than that. The Church is beyond appeal. To this man owes unconditional allegiance; allegiance to the secular good is conditional. One obeys if the state does not prevent the achievement



of ultimate satisfaction, beatitude. We have therefore a strange relationship: two autonomous societies seeking two distinct goals, each society with the proper implementations for the pursuit of its own goal, and yet no conflict in the abstract. If conflict does occur in concrete circumstances then it follows, in terms of ultimate and proximate, in terms of unconditional surrender and conditional surrender, that we have solved the problem as to which of the fellowships deserves man's allegiance. However, although conflict is conceivable in the relationship of these two societies, it is quite clear that if we begin from the notion of a wise and good God the proper relationship between these two societies should avoid conflict; when the possibility of conflict occurs that conflict must be solved by both societies working together to achieve concord.

Let us take the situation of the Catholic. As Pope Leo XIII has pointed out, the same man is simultaneously a citizen of a republic and of the city of God, the Church. This man cannot, by the very nature of things, be torn into two. The two societies must work out their own actions in terms of concord. If we mean by union of church and state only concord, there is no great difficulty. Men always work in this way. Two national societies in conflict try to discuss the matter before they go to war; they try to see how they can work out a system whereby each can achieve his own particular goal without being an obstacle to the other. The difficulty in achieving concord between church and state lies in what we call the established churches, which means that in the constitution of a state it is decreed that one and only one church is legally the Church of this people. In the beginning this was the situation of the Church of England. It is no longer so. The Church of England is supported by the

Crown, but it is no longer considered as the only Church; all other churches are also recognized by the law. But still the Anglican Church is the established Church, established by the unwritten constitution of England. It is much the same in Italy. The Catholic Church is established by the Italian constitution as the one church of the people. Many are of the opinion that that is what concord means in Catholic theory. They are falling back on historical events that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when church and state, crown and cross were together, when each commonwealth followed the religion of the king.

It is true that for well over two centuries the Catholic Church strove for establishment wherever it could be achieved. However, concord is not necessarily a synonym for establishment. Concord must be worked out by both sides acting genuinely, according to their own nature.

Let us take the situation of a pluralistic republic like the United States, where for the good of the nation, to promote order and prosperity, the total community in its constitution refused to give its government any power in matters religious. When this is so there is absolutely no way in which the government could establish a church within the general republic. Concord therefore on the part of the United States and the Church cannot be achieved by establishment, which is impossible by reason of the kind of state that exists here. Concord therefore must necessarily follow some other pattern. The pattern which is used in this country is this: Catholics, through their voice and through their vote, indicate to the nation as a whole ~~what~~ particular grievance they have with reference to secular legislation. The Catholic will and must accept, if he is an American,

the will indicated by the vote of the majority and the action of his representatives in government. Establishment is not at all the only pattern of concord. One can actually have concord produced by the free expression on the part of the Catholics of their own particular desire within the secular framework. We have therefore a possibility of concord without any need for establishment. We can work out our concord without a concordat.

We can also work out our concord without diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The Vatican State of course is not the Catholic Church. It is merely a small sovereignty which was artificially created to give independence to the Roman Pontiff. As Catholics we do not need the Vatican State. Concord does not require that there be diplomatic relations between the sovereign state of the Vatican and the sovereign state of the United States. Our government might establish diplomatic relations. But if it does, it will always do so for a *secular* good, not because it is accepting the voice of the Pope as the religious head of this country. If it accepts such diplomatic relations, it will be strictly in the order of the secular, never in the order of the sacral. It will be the obligation and concern of the governor to find out whether such an establishment of relations would further the common good. Given the feelings of our nation as a whole, with its strong hostility against any relationship with the Vatican State, it would be an unwise ruler who would try to establish such relations. They are not necessary and the harm they would produce would be more than enough to avoid them. The diplomatic recognition of the Vatican is not a Catholic dogma, much less a Catholic need.

We have mentioned then the three principles that have

never been denied by any Catholic thinker. Moreover, we can speak in terms of two thousand years of experience and historical development of thinking on these matters. It is true that at different times within these two thousand years Catholic theologians have added other principles or interpreted one principle in a very definitive and particular fashion. Here we have variations. This variation is necessary because the notion of the state as a historical concrete reality is itself variable. One can see that for our American framework of existence, there is no threat of church domination of state. There is even, by a combination of the three principles, a ready pattern for avoiding conflict between the proper and legitimate interests of both societies. We must again insist that the principle of concord does not mean establishment of the Catholic Church by a government. If a government indeed should choose establishment, it will do so not because it is acting in the sacral order, but because such establishment would be a secular good, something which would aid order and prosperity. This would be the only true and proper motive whereby the secular state would establish a supernatural church. In history Catholics may not have lived up to the perfection of these three principles. It is much wiser to admit than to deny this fact. But they state what Catholics stand for: the Church is no threat to any government or to any citizen in any kind of commonwealth.

# CATHOLICS AND CORRUPTION

Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S.J.

THE association of Catholicism with corruption has had a long history in the United States. It goes back to the early widespread resistance to immigrants on the part of native Americans who were convinced that an alarming percentage of paupers and criminals came from the immigrant population. It continued through that period when the immigrant was making his presence felt by political action. The boss and the ward heeler continually sought their strength in the foreign vote. Thus the exploitation of the foreign vote—which in large eastern cities generally was a Catholic vote—became acknowledged as an undesirable, a dangerous phenomenon in American life, and its origins were identified with the foreign population.

In more recent years, the prevalence of names from par-

ticular ethnic groups among the ranks of American gangsters, and the delinquency statistics of some of our large, predominantly Catholic cities raises the question again in another form: is there some fundamental weakness in the Catholic community that makes Catholics more vulnerable to crime and corruption?

In general, the criticism that Catholics are particularly susceptible to crime and corruption has never been open or explicit. It has been implied. The criticism is usually directed against a nationality or ethnic group which happens to be predominantly Catholic, that is, the Irish, the Italians, the Puerto Ricans, the Mexicans. The present chapter is an attempt to unravel this vexing question and to clarify some of the factors, religious and nonreligious, which are involved. The first factor is the problem of statistics on crime and delinquency. Statistics are necessary and helpful; but, when used without proper understanding, they are also dangerous. The second factor is the problem of immigrant experience. The third factor is a series of contemporary problems that affect Catholics and non-Catholics alike; they are the result, partly of certain social situations in the United States, partly of some general American attitudes toward civic life and responsibility.

A distinction should be made between crime and delinquency on the one hand and what is known as corruption in business or government on the other. Each of these should be given separate treatment. But in so short a space as this, they will be discussed together as examples of a failure in basic social responsibilities.

### *Statistics*

When we talk about Catholics and crime or delinquency, we are first faced with a problem of definition. Who is a Catholic;

and what is crime or delinquency? A Catholic may be a person who was baptized in the Church and nothing more; he may be one who was well educated in the faith and fell away. When one seeks really reliable evidence of the factor of religion in the lives of delinquents or criminals, it simply is not available. Father Leo Kalmer, when Chaplain at Joliet State Prison, explained that of the large numbers of inmates registered as Catholic, about 10 percent had never been baptized; and 80 percent had never made their Easter Duty.<sup>1</sup> James Brennan, formerly of the New York State Youth Commission, said that 85 percent of the serious cases he had handled had no real religious affiliation at all.<sup>2</sup> They listed themselves as Catholics, but "you won't find one half of one half of one percent who could claim even minimum practice of their faith." On the other hand, Harry Elmer Barnes, in his recent book, *New Horizons in Criminology*, cites evidence that among juvenile reform schools and prisons, the Catholic population is 2½ times as high as the Protestant. He claims that evidence exists to prove that these young people were brought up in orthodox religious surroundings. He refers to a study done in Passaic, by Kvaraceus, of 761 delinquent children. Two thirds of the children were Catholic, either Roman or Orthodox; more than 50 percent had attended Church regularly, and about 20 percent had attended occasionally.<sup>3</sup>

Where does this leave us? Not much further than we were before. It indicates that there are other factors in the picture which may throw the religious factor into a different focus.

1. Kalmer, Leo, O.F.M. *Crime and Religion*. Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1936, p. 81.

2. Brennan, James, J. "The Root of Our Delinquency Problem," *Social Order* VII: 304 (9/57), p. 308.

3. Barnes, Harry Elmer, *New Horizons in Criminology*, 3d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1959, pp. 614-616.

Statistics on crime and delinquency, as they now exist, are of practically no value in attempting to analyze the relationship of religious belief and practice to delinquent or criminal behavior.

Secondly, if the statistics *were* available, the question would still remain: what do they mean? For instance, it is widely recognized that arrests can be touched off by any number of factors. A police commissioner decides to execute a "crash program" to rid an area of hoodlums. The number of arrests skyrockets. The statistical record, showing 30 percent more arrests during the month of the crash program does not mean there was any more or any less delinquency during that period. It may simply mean that the police were more vigilant. But a statistical report will generally not indicate this.

Another important factor in dealing with statistical records is the relationship of the statistics to the total population. Some time ago, at a rather important meeting on delinquency, a high public official was giving the breakdown of delinquencies according to religion. He reported that, in the period under consideration, 55 percent of the delinquents were Catholic; 30 percent were Negro and Protestant; 15 percent were other. One person in the meeting raised the question, "Am I to infer from your figures that there are practically no white, Protestant delinquents in the City of New York?" The official replied: "I think it is more accurate to say there are practically no white Protestant children in the City of New York." The 55 percent Catholic delinquents reflected quite accurately the estimated percentage of Catholics in the New York population. In a study<sup>4</sup> of 510 parolees who left the Massachusetts Reformatory from 1911-1922, the religious composition of the parolees reflected

4. Glueck, Sheldon and E. 500 *Criminal Careers*, N.Y., 1930, p. 132.



almost perfectly the religious composition of the general population. Therefore, any statistical record of delinquencies according to religion is meaningless unless it is compared to the characteristics of the population as a whole. Some years ago a prominent New Yorker made much of the fact that the percentage of Puerto Rican juvenile delinquents was more than double the percentage of Puerto Ricans in the population as a whole. What he had failed to note was the fact that he was dealing with an age bracket from age 14-21; the percentage of Puerto Ricans in that specific age bracket was much higher than the percentage of Puerto Ricans in the population as a whole. The delinquency rate actually reflected the characteristics of the population more clearly than he indicated.

In summary, therefore, it is safe to conclude that available statistics on the relationship of religion to crime and delinquency are practically meaningless. The kind of refined data needed to enable a person to make reliable judgments about this relationship has not been gathered in the past and is not being gathered now. Therefore, in relation to religion, statistics must be used with great caution.

### *Religion, crime, corruption and the immigrant*

When crime and corruption are examined in relation to immigration, the discussion becomes more meaningful. In the first place, the law falls heavily on the unprotected and unsophisticated immigrants. Therefore, they turn up in the criminal statistics in amazingly high proportions. Secondly, the data pertaining to crime were regularly used in a very biased way to discredit the immigrants. The data were taken without qualification, as an indication that immigrants were a worthless

people, the dregs of Europe cast upon our shores. Fortunately, these judgments have been corrected in the course of our history. But some of the impressions and images have a surprising staying power and they keep alive in the public mind some of the impressions which were common in earlier generations. Let us give an example of how this worked. The following is a report on crime made in 1856:

It has been stated in the public journals, that of 16,000 commitments for crimes in New York City, during 1852, at least one-fourth were minors, and that no less than 10,000 children are daily suffering all the evils of vagrancy in that city. In 1849 the chief of the police department of that city called attention to the increasing number of vagrant, idle, and vicious children of both sexes, growing up in ignorance and profligacy, and destined to a life of misery, shame, and crime, the number of whom were given upon authority and with an exactness which claims confidence. He stated that there were then 2,955 children of the class described, known to the police in eleven patrol districts, of whom two-thirds were females between eight and sixteen years of age. Most of the children, as was stated at that time, were of German or Irish parentage, the proportion of American-born being not more than one in five.

These facts present a melancholy picture of the evil influences that are operating upon a large portion of the rising generation of our country. A volume of well-attested cases might be cited to show the inevitable effects upon our free institutions from such a population. If it were one of the objects of our government to sow broad-cast the seeds of its own destruction, there could be no better nor more effective scheme devised, than to stultify itself on the subject, and adopt no means whereby the vast juvenile vagrant population, now so rapidly on the increase, may be rescued from its youthful career of immorality, vice and crime. The sources of this great moral evil may be almost wholly traced to the many vices of our foreign population, of disorder, idleness, and uncleanness, and degrading vices of all kinds, and who exercise no parental authority whatever over them. How can it be expected that children, with no other examples to emulate, who are neither sent to school nor church, nor put to work, will grow up otherwise than as vicious idlers,

with whom vagrancy is a confirmed habit, and thieving, a profession, long before they arrive at the age of manhood? <sup>5</sup>

What happened is quite clear. Statistics were used without qualification to show that most of the delinquents and criminals were foreign-born. This was taken to mean that there was something degraded and perverted about the foreigners. They were evil. Since most of them were Catholics, the unmentioned inference was perfectly clear. Let us cite another example:

Of the 68,873 persons arrested for offences against person and property, for the year ending October 31, 1865, 45,837 were foreigners; and of these 32,867 were Irish, and but 23,036, white and black, all told, were natives. Of the whole number arrested, 13,576 could neither read nor write. Nor should the fact be overlooked, that many of the native-born paupers and criminals are the offspring of foreigners, who were themselves paupers and criminals. Hence, much of our indigenous pauperism and crime is mediately traceable to foreign parentage, which, under our genial institution, produces and perpetuates this noxious and parasitic growth of unproductive humanity.<sup>6</sup>

The accusations were not confined to crime and delinquency. They were extended to corruption as well. Note that the implications are exactly the same:

To talk of the government of New York as a scandal to republican institutions is a very mild way of characterizing it. It is literally a blot on our religion and on our civilization . . . the canker is at work everywhere. The purses of the rich cities are everywhere passing into the hands of the ignorant, the vicious, and the depraved, and are being used by them for the spread of political corruption, for the destruction of the popular faith in political purity, for the promotion of debauchery

5. From "Foreign Criminals and Paupers." Report from the committee on Foreign Affairs, August 16, 1856 (Thirty-fourth Congress, 1st Session, House Report No. 359, pp. 16-17). Quoted in Edith Abbott, *Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem*, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1926, pp. 621-622.

6. From *Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the New York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor*. (1867) pp. 36-45. Quoted in Abbott, p. 653.

and idleness among young men of the poorer classes, for the destruction of our system of education. When knaves have reached such a point of audacity as to sell regularly the teacherships in our public schools in order to provide funds for their own carousals, it is almost time for us either to shut our churches up and confess ourselves canting humbugs, whose religion is but in words, and whose patriotism is but a sham, or to put an end to these abuses. There can be little question that the corporation of the City of New York is at this moment a greater stumbling-block in the path of democracy and freedom through the world than any single potentate, hierarchy, or body of aristocracy in existence.

We all know what the source of evil is. In all our large towns a swarm of foreigners have alighted, ignorant, credulous, newly emancipated, brutalized by oppression, and bred in the habit of regarding the law as their enemy, the rich as their tyrants, and a longed-for but unattainable prey. They are welcomed for the sake of their labor, and are almost at once admitted to a share in the government.<sup>7</sup>

I emphasize these things to point out the tone of the consistent reactions of native Americans to the problems in which immigrants and newcomers became involved in our large cities. An enormous change has been a characteristic of our cities for a century and a half, the upsetting of old ways and old arrangements, upheavals which produced the new city of the future. Throughout this time the older citizens have always projected their disappointment and frustration onto the newcomers, the immigrants. Since these were predominantly Catholic in our large eastern cities, Catholicism became associated with delinquency, crime, and corruption.

When, later on, our discussion touches on the contemporary scene, the role of the Church and of Catholics in our present difficulties will not make much sense unless we see the present growing out of this tumultuous, interesting, colorful but distressing past. And when we read the statistics about the Negroes or

7. From "The Government of our Great Cities," by E. T. Godkin, in *The Nation* III (Oct. 18, 1866), p. 312. Quoted in Abbott, *op. cit.*, pp. 648-649.

Puerto Ricans and raise our eyebrows with the self-righteous comment, "There must be something wrong with Negroes or with Puerto Ricans, or with Mexicans," we are perpetuating the old tradition. I do not wish in any way to belittle the seriousness of crime or political corruption as it has affected and continues to affect life in the United States. I am simply indicating that when it is attributed to a particular race or ethnic group or religious group, we are not getting near the answer.

The perspective of history and the inquiries of modern criminology have thrown a great deal of light on the problem of crime and corruption among immigrant people. Let me briefly outline some of the propositions now taken for granted in the social sciences.

1. Immigrant groups do not bring crime or delinquency with them. It happens to them when they get here. They face the difficult experience of uprooting and of finding their way as strangers in a strange land. Their poverty and exploitation leave them particularly prone to that disorganization which fosters crime and delinquency.
2. The law always bears down more severely on the immigrant, the poor, the underprivileged. They have not the means, the sophistication, the contacts to avoid the penalty of the law, or to seek the kinds of protection available to wealthier, more knowledgeable citizens. In many cases, they show up in high percentages in prison populations simply because they do not have bail.
3. In this situation, the political patron became a standard institution among the poor and the immigrant in American cities.

He was the link between the underprivileged and the favor of the law. He was the protector. As more than one political writer in the United States has said: "If the boss did not exist in American politics, the poor would have to have invented him." Although the day of the boss appears to be passing, *The Last Hurrah* was a testimonial to an inevitable institution in American life. When our cities failed to satisfy the pressing needs of millions of their citizens who struggled in the slums, it was inevitable that the people would create some institution through which to satisfy their needs themselves. This was the political boss, the ward heeler. Since the poor in the large cities were predominantly Catholic, much of the shady, obscure deviation from law in favor of the little people became associated with Catholics. From this point of view, what has been defined as corruption is more accurately described as a form of self-protection which has been an understandable part of immigrant life on the American scene since the nation began.

There is one brief footnote needed at the end of this part of our discussion. If delinquency and the political maneuvering called corruption were characteristics of immigrant life, why did they not affect all immigrants alike? In the area of delinquency, why is it that the Jewish immigrants have escaped the delinquent ranks? A number of explanations are suggested by contemporary social scientists. In the first place, the Jews were the only immigrants coming to the U.S. who came to any large extent from urban areas in Europe. Great numbers of them had had the experience of complicated urban living which the Irish, Germans, etc., had never had. They were not so shaken by the problem of adjustment to a city environment. Secondly, cen-

turies of persecution had schooled the Jew into every effective way of protecting himself. With its customs and institutions, the Jewish community found self-protection much easier here, in the freedom of America, than in the ghettos of Europe. Finally, when Jewish children do become delinquent, the Jewish community has well developed means of reaching them quickly, and of keeping them out of the routine channels of the courts. I am not suggesting that they circumvent the law. They do not. But they deal with the delinquent in the framework of the Jewish community in a way that satisfies public authorities that the delinquent is being properly cared for. In the area of business and political corruption, the Jews have had their own share of unfortunate failures along with the other immigrant groups.

### *The Contemporary Scene*

At this point, the distinction must be more clearly pointed out between delinquency on the one hand, and corruption, whether in politics, business or labor unions, on the other. In open discussions of these phenomena today, religious identification is rarely mentioned; certainly it is never mentioned with the implication that it can explain either.

Since the extensive Senate Committee Hearings on Juvenile Delinquency in 1955,<sup>8</sup> the nation realizes that delinquency is a nation-wide phenomenon. It is striking every class, every ethnic group, and the children of every religious faith. Religion enters the discussion when the question of prevention or remedy is

8. A popular summary of the Hearings can be found in "Post Reports on Juvenile Delinquency; The Shame of America," by R. Clendenen and H. W. Beaser in *Saturday Evening Post*, Vol. 227 (1955), Jan. 8, 17-19+; Jan. 15, 32-33+; Jan. 22, 24-25+; Jan. 29, 30+; Feb. 5, 30+.

raised. In other words: how can the religious training of youth be improved to enable them to protect themselves against delinquency.

Secondly in the McClellan hearings on labor corruption, and the repeated scandals in politics and business, the sweep is general.<sup>9</sup> It touches every class, every section, every ethnic group and religious faith. The executives of the electrical industry who were sentenced to jail for illegal practice represented the pillars of Catholic and Protestant Churches.<sup>10</sup> The fact that there were no Jews probably is due to the simple fact that the Jews are hard to find among the executives of American industrial empires.

The question of religion vs. corruption, therefore, may be phrased generally for all religious groups: How does one explain, among people who profess to be religious people, the prevalence of many practices which are called corrupt. This is the question I would like to raise briefly from the Catholic point of view.

1. In the first place, Americans by and large are still affected by the experience of immigrant life. The strong emphasis on family loyalties, neighborhood loyalties, nationality loyalties is not the best training for a careful, objective consideration of the common welfare. The preferences and favoritism to the members of the in-group are not easily overcome; the suspicions and distrust of those "who are not our own kind" are constantly confusing the issue of objective justice and the general welfare. When one examines the contact and often the conflict of the

9. cf. The popular presentation of some of the more sensational disclosures of the committee in Kennedy, Robert T., *The Enemy Within*, N.Y., Harper & Bros., 1960.

10. cf. The analysis of the conspiracy in "The Incredible Electrical Conspiracy," Pt. I *Fortune*, 1961, April, Pt. II *Fortune*, May, 1961.



many nationality groups that make up America, it is a miracle of political and social maturity that any common effort can be sustained. Nevertheless, it is precisely the conflict of loyalties and interest involved here that leads people to accept a practice as perfectly moral as long as "my people" do all right in the process.

2. In the second place, values in the United States are in a state of constant and rapid change. We are not living in a world where the sacred traditions of generations and centuries make clear to people what kind of behavior is right or wrong. We live in a society which has made a positive value of out change. Our institutions are geared to generate change. This affects mainly our technology, and to a large extent also our customs and social practices. But it affects our moral norms as well. Americans are no longer so sure of themselves in these areas as their ancestors were. There is a fundamental openness or flexibility of values in America that opens the way to innovation, risk, adventure. This is a general condition in which practices can easily develop which are called corrupt.

What is more serious, in American society a primary emphasis is placed on competitiveness, the drive to advance oneself, to get ahead. At the same time, access to opportunities for advancement is regularly denied to people of underprivileged races or nationality groups. In the resulting confusion, it is understandable that anxious strivers may try to gain the cherished end of economic advancement by taking means which they later discover are considered corrupt by American society.<sup>11</sup> The com-

11. For the effects of competitiveness on American people, and the possibility of it driving them to crime, corruption, or mental illness etc., cf. the excellent text by Harry Bredemeier and Jackson Toby, *Social Problems in America*, N.Y., Wiley, 1960.

petitive pressures on business firms to advance their profits and social pressures on ordinary citizens to advance their income have become so relentless that a general attitude has developed of closing one's eyes to violations of ethical norms, as long as one is not caught.

3. Thirdly, there is the difficulty of defining clearly in a complicated society what corruption is. No one in government circles or in private business has settled the problem of gifts. Nor has anyone settled the problem of conflicts of interest. Finally the public is not always carefully instructed on a decision that may have been the only sensible alternative between two evils, or two goods.<sup>12</sup>

4. Fourthly, there is the enormous problem of our rapidly growing technology, and the problem of adequate information for those who must make decisions in public office. In almost every crucial decision of government, the executive or legislator is faced with a body of data which only the highly skilled expert can understand: space exploration; nuclear armament; atomic submarines; international finance; calculation of wages, and so on. Even in matters which he might understand with adequate study, he does not have the time to master essential information. The central strain on all executives today is recognized as this: They must make and take responsibility for decisions which they make on the basis of inadequate information or insufficient understanding. If the wrong decision is made, the charge of malfeasance, corruption, political preference, radical or reactionary, will be hurled at the executive from a dozen directions.

12. Bailey, Stephen K. *Ethics and the Politician*. published by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, California.

These are the complicating factors of moral problems in contemporary life. I do not list them to prove that evil actions are not committed; or that they are not evil when they are committed. There is fortunately a wide consensus concerning the serious immorality of many acts, from the sale of protection to deceitfulness in advertising or the exploitation of poor tenants in slum areas. There is also a constant effort on the part of thoughtful men to specify more precisely what is unethical in public life. But, despite this, the range of uncertainty is unusually wide in our society. The circumstances of modern life expose men more dangerously to the risk of performing actions which they may consider proper, but which others may publicize as corrupt when it serves their purpose to do so.

What remedy do I propose? There is no simple one. In the complicated actions of modern public life men can rarely rely on clear, secure, traditional definitions of what is right and wrong. Therefore, if a man is to behave justly, he must face the problem of difficult moral decision on his own. He must be a man who has cultivated a sense of justice and righteousness. He must also be a man who is immersed in the details of situations so that he will know what justice means in these situations. Knowing what the situation is in all its complexity, and having a sense of what is right and just, he can be trusted to make the decision which is most likely to conform to justice. Saint Thomas once remarked that only the just man can really say what the just act is. More and more, in a complicated world, moral judgment must become the responsibility of the individual in the actual situation. This is a burden that will try the souls of many; it is a burden that exposes us to corruption or to the accusation of corruption; but it is a burden that is also capable of making spiritual and moral heroes.

Secondly there must be a constant effort on the part of the community to clarify its moral and ethical norms; to try to limit the range in which uncertainty exposes men to the practice or the accusation of corruption. In a pluralistic society which insists on the right of men to hold differing moral convictions and religious beliefs, this is not an easy task. But a trust in the fundamental goodness of men should strengthen the conviction that it is increasingly possible. And religious faith should inspire Americans to the sacrifice necessary to achieve it.

# AUTHORITY AND PRIVATE JUDGMENT

W. Norris Clarke, S.J.

MANY intelligent people who are not Catholics feel that a forbidding warning is posted—metaphorically speaking—above the door of every Catholic Church, “Do not enter here unless you are willing to submit to the authority of the Church of Christ.” Yet millions of intelligent Catholics, including many critical minds and scholars, seem to be able to do this without the feeling that membership in the Church involves the abdication of their intelligence or the demeaning of their human dignity. Obviously there is a paradox here that cries out for further elucidation. Either Catholics are not like other men or else there is a misunderstanding somewhere.

Let us admit frankly the genuineness of the difficulty. The demand of the Catholic Church that mature people submit the

judgment of their reason—the noblest part of man, as the Church teaches—to the intellectual and moral authority of other human beings, often no better or more intelligent, does constitute a stumbling block to modern man, especially to one brought up in a democracy. Should it not do so? Should not anyone who thinks for himself and values his independence of mind, the root of his freedom and his dignity as a man, feel a justified repugnance when asked by another human being to surrender the freedom of his judgment? External authority for the sake of public order in external actions, traffic laws and the like, is one thing. Everyone understands the need for that type of authority. But authority over the world of one's personal beliefs and conscience is quite another. Does not the latter involve two fundamental violations of human dignity: (1) an abdication of the light of one's intelligence before the intelligence of another human being; (2) a surrender of one's freedom of conscience and right to decide about one's actions?

The above is or should be the most basic and serious difficulty against the authority of the Church. It is a difficulty of principle. I think it can be given a satisfactory solution in principle, though living it out is not always so easy a matter. There is a second difficulty, however, of a more practical and psychological nature, which plays no small part in the attitudes of many; this is the resentment against the actual manner in which this authority is exercised in concrete situations by a particular representative of the Church, a priest, a pastor, a bishop, or even the Pope. There is no easy solution to this difficulty. But neither is it reasonable to demand that there should be. We shall have to admit very candidly that the state of the Church in this life is, of its very nature, an imperfect one, owing to the weakness of

its members, both leaders and led. Catholics are neither surprised nor shocked at this, in view of the far more drastic example of Judas. They rather feel that the pearl of great price which the Church gives them, a living participation in the truth and life of God, more than compensates for the humility required to bear this burden, or at least the risk of occasional misuse of authority in accidental matters.

We shall discuss first the general difficulty of principle outlined above. In what follows, we shall not attempt to give a complete explanation of authority as exercised in the Catholic Church, nor of all its kinds and degrees, who exercises them, their origins, the kind of obedience due to each, and so on. This would involve a long technical discussion impossible to handle within the scope of this chapter. We shall try to do two things only: (1) to show how submission to the authority of the Church is a *reasonable* act for a Catholic; and (2) how, far from being an abdication of private judgment, this submission always requires the prudent exercise of private judgment.

The method we shall follow is to sketch a model or analogy from our nonreligious experience, a situation in which any normal person would consider accepting the authority of another human being as not only reasonable, but the *only* reasonable thing to do. We shall then apply this model situation to authority in the Church.

Let us first construct our model case. Suppose a man discovers that something is seriously wrong with his health. He faints often, suddenly and without warning—obviously a dangerous state of affairs. He tries amateur advice, pills, and home remedies. Nothing works. He finally goes to a doctor who sends him to a specialist. The latter, after careful tests, concludes that

the man has a dangerous illness and that only a certain operation can save him.

Now, in this situation would not most people consider that the only reasonable procedure would be to follow the advice of the doctor, accept his authority, and do what he prescribes? The point to note here is that this would be not a surrendering or abdication of reason, of personal judgment, but precisely its wisest exercise. For it is the individual in question and no one else who judges that it is the best thing to submit to the doctor's authority. It is he who must sign the papers permitting the operation.

Let us note carefully the requirements for such a situation to be verified: (1) One must be faced with an *important* problem *demanding* a solution. If it is not something important or crucial, there is no need to bother much about it; (2) One lacks sufficient knowledge to solve the problem and by the nature of the case cannot get it on his own, at least not in time; (3) there is a qualified individual who has the knowledge required and is willing to communicate it, if his authority is accepted. Once these conditions are fulfilled it becomes eminently reasonable to submit to the authority in question.

Where exactly does the exercise of private judgment come in here? It comes into play (1) in man's estimating accurately his own condition, that is, the urgency of the problem and his own inability to solve it; (2) in sizing up as accurately as possible, through knowledge or with the help of others, the competence and trustworthiness of the authority who has presented himself. In the last analysis only the individual in question can make these two prudential judgments. The acceptance of authority by a mature person does not dispense with, but



necessarily involves, the accompanying exercise of private or personal judgment.

Now let us apply our "model situation" or analogy to the Catholic Church and its authority. First, is there an important problem demanding a solution? Most certainly. It is a question of man's ultimate destiny, what plans and purposes God, the Creator, has for him, by what means He wishes man to achieve his end. Few problems could be so supremely important as the achievement of one's purpose in life. Is the problem also an urgent one demanding a solution? Again, few problems could be more urgent. For if one fails to attain the final purpose of life, then life as a whole is an ultimate disaster. In a word, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The fact that a large number of people in our present secularized world never give much thought to this problem by no means proves that it is unreasonable to give it serious attention. From a long-range point of view—and it is surely one of the typical characteristics of intelligence to plan for the future—anything else would be catastrophically impractical. As Frank Sheed has put it in his admirable book, *Theology and Sanity*: "Sanity means living mentally in a real world. Remember, this does not mean living in the same world as everyone else; it means living in the real world," according to the full dimensions of its reality.<sup>1</sup>

Let us discuss the second requirement. Does man have on his own, or can he acquire by his own efforts, sufficient knowledge to solve the problem of how best to achieve his personal destiny? By the nature of the case he cannot. For it is a question of the free personal decisions of God concerning mankind. It is true

1. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946, Foreword.

that on his own, if one knows how to use his intelligence properly, one can argue that there must be a Supreme Being, that He is personal, infinitely good, wise, and a few other general attributes. But this in no way informs one regarding the free decisions and plans of this Being with regard to him. Does He have any special plan for me, something He wants me to do on earth in view of some special eternal destiny He may have planned for me following this life? Or has He merely left me to find my own way unaided in this life, to pluck from it whatever precarious happiness I can, with no other prospect but the extinction of my existence after this life? It makes no difference how powerful one's native mental equipment is or how highly one has been educated. The greatest genius and the simplest, most uneducated peasant, with the lowest IQ imaginable, in the most backward country in the world—both are in the same situation in this case. Neither of them can read the free decisions of the divine will. This is God's secret, which man can know only if He Himself reveals it to us in some way. We touch here on a basic feature of the human condition: unless God Himself reveals His plans for us as a personal and loving Father, then we are doomed to grope our way upon this earth with only a few vague and general landmarks amid the encircling mystery of a silent universe that returns no answer to the deepest personal questions.<sup>2</sup>

The first two requirements are therefore fulfilled. What of the third? Is there someone qualified to give the information and guidance we urgently need and cannot get from human wisdom? This is precisely what the Catholic Church claims as

2. John 6:69: "And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

its special mission to mankind. This belief in her mission can be summed up briefly in three points. (1) She believes that God has spoken to mankind and revealed not only a great deal about His nature but above all about His plans for man's ultimate destiny and the means to attain it through life on this earth. (2) She believes that God has spoken to mankind first through His prophets in the Old Testament and now last of all, as St. Paul says, through His own son, Jesus Christ, who being God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, became man to teach and to redeem mankind. (3) She believes that before His departure from this earth Jesus Christ founded a Church which He placed under the leadership of Peter and the other Apostles, with the authoritative mission to carry on His work of teaching and redemption until His second coming as Judge at the end of human history. This authority of the Church is possessed in its full infallibility (that is, guaranteed fidelity to the original Christian message taught by Christ Himself) by the "college" of bishops all over the world united as a body in a general council under the Pope, the legitimate successor to the Chair of St. Peter, or by the same reigning Vicar of Christ wherever He speaks explicitly *ex cathedra*, that is, as presenting or interpreting the teaching of Christ to be believed by all Christians.

This same teaching authority is next shared by each bishop in his own diocese as the authoritative representative of Christ and His Church on the local level. On all levels this authority covers both what we should believe about faith and morals and also, in order to be efficacious guidance and not merely sterile recommendation, what religious and moral *action* we must take to implement our belief. On the level of the individual bishop, however (and even more so on the level of his subordinate dele-

gate, the pastor of a particular church), the teaching authority is not endowed with personal infallibility. The bishop cannot make *new infallible* declarations on matters of faith and morals. His teaching authority derives rather from agreement with the infallible teaching of the universal Church. His interpretation of the traditional teaching of the Church for new situations that arise, while not infallible, has a special weight and efficacy deriving from the grace of his office, so that anyone under his jurisdiction, whether priest or layman, should have grave reasons before questioning his teaching on a given point.

My point here is not to prove the truth of the articles of faith outlined above, that is, to prove that God has spoken to us through His Son and commissioned the Catholic Church to carry on this work through time. That would require much more than a chapter. My aim here is to point out how, *if* one believes the above suppositions to be true, as Catholics do, then it is not only reasonable, but the only reasonable response for such a person to accept gratefully the authority of the Church, within its carefully restricted limits. Why is it reasonable for one to make such an act of free submission? Because here and here alone, a Catholic believes, can he find the answer to the most important question of his life: What does God have in store for me as my ultimate destiny and how does He wish me to achieve it? Would it not be unreasonable, blameworthy, to refuse to make this act of submission in these circumstances?

I would ask the reader to note that I am not trying to persuade him of the truth of the Catholic Church's claims to speak to men in the name of Christ. If someone does not believe this claim justified, then it would be unreasonable on his part to accept the Church's authority, as unreasonable as for the believ-

ing Catholic to reject it. Here is the legitimate and proper area for disagreement and discussion between Catholics and non-Catholics. But the disagreement should not be on the principle of authority as such, as though by its nature authority were a violation of man's dignity and independence as an intelligent, self-governing human being.

It is my impression that when some non-Catholics, especially nonreligious people, react with repugnance to the thought of the authority of the Church, they are substituting quite a different vision of the world for the Catholic vision. They are rightly, but irrelevantly, objecting to the acceptance of authority within such a world-vision. Their hidden supposition is something like this. Man's actual situation is that of an explorer in an indifferent or possibly hostile universe—or at best, an enigmatic one—in which he is obliged to find his way by his wits, with whatever suggestions he can get from fellow explorers, expecting none but the rarest assistance, if any, from whatever mysterious power may be hidden behind the façade of impersonal nature. In this common human predicament all men are pretty much the same, with varying degrees of uncertainty according to their varying levels of intelligence. No one has any authoritative knowledge. Hence any man's view is only as good as the reasons he can bring forward to convince others. Within such a perspective one might indeed do well to ask advice. But there would be no question of any authoritative teacher to whom one should submit his judgment.

The Catholic framework of the question is, however, a profoundly different view of the world. To the Catholic the world is created by a loving Father for those whom He wishes to adopt as His own sons and daughters. He has not left us to

grope our way like explorers by the light of our weak human minds. He has freely taken the initiative and sent His divine Son to tell us of His love and His plans for our happiness, and He has enjoined us to follow the path He has outlined for us, planned by His wisdom and love for our greatest happiness and fulfillment. It is in this context, and this context alone, that the Catholic doctrine of the authority of the Church makes sense. In this perspective the acceptance of authority is not a barrier, restricting one's intellect from searching for some truth that it is quite capable of discovering. It is rather the opening of the mind to a whole new dimension of truth which it would be incapable of arriving at on its own and which would therefore, without some divine help, remain forever closed to its longings. Such a conception of the teaching authority of the Church is not that of a closing in of horizons on a mind able and chafing to reach beyond, but rather of an opening in the clouds that would otherwise envelop us, to reveal a further horizon of undreamed-of grandeur and beauty. This is important to grasp if one wishes to enter into a sympathetic understanding of the psychological attitude of the Catholic toward the authority of his Church, an authority that others—to the Catholic's constant surprise—feel must somehow be constricting and oppressive.

Yet even granted the reasonableness of the Catholic's acceptance of the authority of his Church within the above-outlined framework of belief, there is still an indispensable role which must be played by his private judgment in living out obedience. This is a highly important point—all too often overlooked. The Catholic theory of obedience, whether doctrinal or disciplinary, involves an indissoluble joining of two complementary forces in vital tension: docile readiness to accept au-

thority on the one hand, and on the other, alert critical use of private judgment to judge when and how it is appropriate to do so. There is no such thing as blind obedience on the part of a mature adult within the Church. Such a thing would be both inhuman and un-Christian.

There are two main junctures at which the private judgment of the individual Catholic must come into play in his relations with the authority of the Church. The first is in man's personal assessment of what we might call "the credentials" of the Church, that is, the validity of its claim to be the only authoritative custodian and spokesman of the revealed message of God. This every adult convert must do in a way proportionate to his mental capacities. It need not be a formal reasoning process, nor need he be able clearly to explain and justify his reasons to others. But he must make this basic intellectual judgment assessing the credentials of the Church's authority. He cannot shift the responsibility for it to anyone else. It must be an act of strictly personal or, if you will, private judgment. To accept the Church's authority without this would be unreasonable and beneath human dignity, hence not pleasing to God and, because of its imprudence in an important matter, immoral. The commitment of faith, the Church teaches, must be a personal, intelligent, and free act.

The born Catholic, who grows to maturity slowly within the life of the Church, does not have to make such an explicit analysis of the validity of the Church's claim. He does the equivalent by reflecting on the "existential" evidence of the goodness and fruitfulness of his Christian life as lived out in the concrete. Though not strictly necessary, however, it is still important and fruitful for his spiritual and personal development

that, as he grows in maturity, he makes his primitive commitment of faith ever more explicit, intelligently reflective, and responsibly personal.

Indispensable as it is, however, this basic act of assessing the reasonableness of submission in general to the Church's authority is not the only nor the most frequent exercise of the Catholic's personal judgment. The second and more frequent exercise is the judgment of the individual Catholic that here and now in these concrete circumstances the Church is speaking in accordance with its legitimate authority and within the traditional limits of its "constitution," so to speak. This function of private judgment in the Church may come as a surprise to many non-Catholics, who take it for granted that obedience to the authority of the Church means that the Catholic must unquestioningly accept whatever he is taught or ordered to do by an official representative of the Church, such as a pastor or the Pope. On the contrary, although making these judgments is ordinarily a routine matter, it can sometimes become quite complex and difficult, requiring a high degree of intelligence and prudence.

Let us first examine the case of doctrine to be believed. Is a Catholic supposed to accept blindly, as an object of faith, or simply as true, whatever he hears taught from the pulpit or in print by his pastor, or his bishop, or even the Pope? By no means. He has not only the right but the obligation to submit it to the test of his private judgment. On what does this judgment bear? Not on whether he likes this doctrine or approves of it on the basis of his own reasoning. Catholic belief is not a matter of democratic vote. It bears on two points only. (1) Is



the speaker a legitimate spokesman for the Church, actually speaking in that role and not merely expressing a private opinion of his own? (2) Does what he proposes seem in accord with the traditional Church teaching which the Catholic first learned in his catechism and which he has been accustomed to hear and believe throughout his Catholic life?

The more thorough, precise, and mature one's understanding of traditional Catholic doctrine, the greater is one's ability to make this judgment in detail, with certainty, and on one's own responsibility. The less this understanding is developed, the less a man can trust his own judgment and hence he is obliged, when in doubt, to give the benefit of the doubt to the speaker, at least until he can check the matter further.

Let us suppose that one were a member of the legendary congregation that heard a sermon on the power of Our Lady by an overenthusiastic preacher. "My dear brethren," the preacher is supposed to have said, "Mary is so powerful that she can even free souls imprisoned in Hell." When the pastor rebuked the preacher and insisted that he correct his mistake in the next sermon, the embarrassed young man is supposed to have told the congregation that Mary could free from Hell only those souls which had been sentenced there unjustly in the first place.

Suppose one were a Catholic listening to this sermon. Would it be proper for him to bow his head in unquestioning obedience to the teaching authority of the Church as represented by this cleric? Certainly not. Even the most modestly instructed Catholic should have enough sense of authentic Catholic doctrine to realize that God does not make mistakes. The listener

would be perfectly correct in demurring. He would be exercising one's normal function of private judgment in the concrete life of the Church.

Let us suppose the more difficult case of a Catholic in a Roman church around the year 1333, listening to the Sunday sermon of Pope John XXII. That Pope happened to have a pet theological opinion that after death the souls of the saved did not receive the full beatific vision until the Last Judgment and the resurrection of all bodies. He also loved to preach to his people as the Bishop of Rome, though he was careful never to present this particular doctrine as infallible or impose it on the Church to be believed. In fact, because he was not sure of it himself, he frequently had theological discussions on the point staged before him to help clarify the problem.

What should have been the proper attitude of an auditor of these sermons? To say, "The Pope himself is speaking. I accept it all as truth"? Certainly not. One might have to be a fairly well educated Catholic to suspect that something was wrong. But one would have been acting in the Catholic spirit if he had tested what he heard against his knowledge and instinct for traditional Catholic faith, and made some such judgment as this: "I am not entirely sure about this. But it does not sound quite right to me. It does not seem to fit in with what I have always believed to be Catholic doctrine. I had better inquire further before accepting this and incorporating it into my belief." The touchstone of such judgments is not whether one likes the doctrine or not, but whether it fits in with the great landmarks of the traditional deposit of faith, handed down from Christ and His apostles and enshrined in the Creeds and public prayer of the Church. I might add, by the way, that this

is just what Pope John's auditors did. And when word of this opinion came to the University of Paris, the great center of theological learning at the time, the theologians came out against the Pope, declaring his opinion to be heretical—and correctly so. Furthermore, when he lay on his deathbed in 1334, the day before his death, he formally renounced his unwitting heresy. He then died in peace and everyone went happily to his proper place, the Pope—we presume—to that beatific vision whose immediate enjoyment he had denied, and the theologians back to their books. It was a striking example of the interplay of authority and private judgment which is always at work in the life of the Church.

This exercise of private judgment is going on constantly in the Church. Most Catholics never advert to the fact that they are practicing it, except on those comparatively rare occasions when it flashes a warning signal of negation or caution. But it acts as a constant built-in check from below against the infiltration, deliberate or indeliberate, of distortion of the authentic Christian message by individual leaders in the Church. Theologians even have a special name for it, the *sensus fidelium*, or instinct of the faithful, and consider it as one of the partial sources for verifying the authenticity of doctrines. It becomes especially important at the moment when heresy is just beginning within the Church, as the Church has witnessed many times in its long history. Admittedly there are many cases where it becomes a very delicate business to apply this right of private judgment without overstepping proper limits. But this only means that the virtue of prudence is needed in using the right, not that the right itself does not exist or should never be used. The spirit of habitual reverence, humility, and readiness

to accept the teaching of the Church, characteristic of the sincere believer, should always incline him to give the benefit of the doubt to the teaching he hears, especially to pronouncements of the Holy Father himself for the universal Church, even when these are not backed with the full weight of infallible definition.

Let us now turn our attention briefly to the second type of situation, which calls for the exercise of personal judgment as a necessary constituent of Catholic obedience to the Church's authority. The first type had to do with the acceptance of doctrine; the second is concerned with action, what one should do or not do, in a religious or moral matter.

Here again it is never authentic Catholic obedience to obey blindly and without reflection whenever any representative of the Church gives a command. Since obedience, if it is to be truly human and worth anything in the eyes of God, must be a free, personal act, it must be preceded by a personal act of judgment, on the part of the one obeying, that it is reasonable and good for him here and now to obey this command. This involves passing judgment on the following points: (1) Is this a legitimate spokesman for the Church, speaking in this role? This question is usually quite easy to answer. (2) Does the command he is giving fall within the limits of his legitimate authority, that is, the domain of religious or moral issues?

When the command involves some general moral principle, such as divorce, birth control, racism in general, and so forth, the problem is much the same as in the case of the acceptance of doctrine, which was treated above.

The real difficulties occur when there is question of a command of a particular Church authority, say a bishop or pastor,

regarding an action to be done or avoided here and now in these special circumstances, especially when the command involves some concrete application of a general moral principle. Such would be the command of a bishop to stay away from a certain movie, to vote for or against a political party, to accept race integration now in this particular school, church, or diocese, to dress or not to dress in such and such a manner.

Most of these cases are sufficiently clear-cut, so much so that those subject to the command scarcely advert to the fact that they have passed judgment on its legitimacy and on their obligation to obey it. But since it is difficult to determine clearly and exactly where serious moral issues begin and end, there is more chance for doubtful cases to arise here than in the case of doctrines to be believed. The spectrum extends all the way from clear black and white at the two extremes to a gray no-man's-land in the middle. The exercise of personal judgment then becomes a matter of importance for the proper functioning of authority in the Church.

Let us take a case or two. Some years ago an American bishop became so concerned with the low moral tone of Hollywood movies that he forbade the people of his diocese under pain of sin to go to any movies. This order caused considerable confusion among his people. Many made the personal judgment that going to a good movie could not be forbidden under pain of sin, since there was no sinful matter involved, even indirectly. So many priests supported their view that the bishop's command quietly became a dead letter within a few months without being formally rescinded. The judgment of the people and the priests was sound and in the spirit of intelligent, responsible obedience. The bishop's command exceeded the limits

of his authority over moral issues and, therefore, did not bind those to whom it was addressed.

Let us suppose a pastor of an American parish were to order all the women in the parish to wear only long-sleeved dresses at all times, for the sake of greater modesty. Since according to the common feeling and practice in this country there need be nothing immodest in wearing a short-sleeved dress, the pastor would have exceeded his authority in making a moral case out of something neutral and indifferent. Hence the women should have the Catholic sense to ignore the pastor's injunction.

The above cases are rather easy ones for the ordinary Catholic to solve. It is obvious that other cases can and do arise where the extreme complexity of the issues involved can cause anguish to the Catholic trying to decide whether he should obey or not. But in all cases, the point remains the same: the judgment whether it is proper or necessary to obey in this particular case must be made by each individual Catholic. He cannot abdicate this right and obligation and shift the responsibility to anyone else. If the matter is not sufficiently clear, he can, of course, consult others more competent, and ordinarily he *should* do so both out of prudence and out of humility. He can then decide to follow their judgment rather than his own. But even here, it is he who must personally, and freely, decide to follow another's judgment. If a person were to decline the responsibility for making such a "private" judgment on the reasonableness of his own act of obedience, and obey in a completely blind way, simply because a particular bishop or priest so ordered him, his obedience would lose its specifically human and moral quality. It would become the act of a child or an

irrational being, hence not meritorious in the eyes of God.

In the above analysis of the act of obedience we are following no less an authority than St. Thomas Aquinas. In a terse but magnificent charter of human dignity, he lays down the principle:

Every man is bound to examine his own actions according to the knowledge that God has given him, whether natural, or acquired, or infused from above: for every human being is bound to act according to reason.<sup>3</sup>

In answer to the objection that since a "prelate" (that is, an ecclesiastical superior) is superior to his subject, his command should bind more than that of the subject's own conscience, and hence it would be unfitting for the subject to pass judgment on his superior's command, he concludes thus:

Although the prelate is superior to his subject, nevertheless God, from whose precept the individual conscience derives its binding force, is superior to the prelate. . . . Hence, although it is not fitting that the subject pass judgment on the content of the prelate's command considered in itself, it is proper for him to pass judgment on whether or not he should obey this command. For it is this which is his personal concern.

Here St. Thomas is laying down the fundamental philosophy of human obedience for anyone who possesses the use of reason. All obedience demands an inseparable joining of two elements: the command of a legitimate authority, plus the personal judgment of the one commanded that he should here and now obey this command. The second element can never be dispensed with without degrading the act of obedience and bring-

3. *Truth (De Veritate)*, q. 17, art. 5, resp. to obj. 3 and 4 combined (adapted from the translation of J. McGlynn, S.J., Chicago, Regnery, 1953, Vol. II). The "To the Contrary" and the first paragraph of the main corpus of the same article are also recommended.

ing it to a lower level than that demanded by our dignity as free, self-governing, rational persons ultimately responsible before God for our actions.

The Church is not in the least afraid of this doctrine of St. Thomas nor does it try to keep it hidden as some kind of dangerous incitement to independence or revolt. It rather presupposes it in all its exercise of authority. It presumes that its authority is being directed toward free, mature, responsible persons, who realize their obligation to assume responsibility for their actions and hence to judge in each case whether they should obey a given command or not.

I am quite willing to admit, however, that not only a large number of non-Catholics but also not a few Catholics have quite fuzzy and even seriously distorted ideas about the true nature of human obedience in general, and even more so about obedience to the authority of the Church. Such misunderstanding can perhaps be traced to the exhortation often found in spiritual books and the rule books of some religious congregations which states that we should practice "blind obedience" to our religious superiors. Venerable as the expression is, it must be taken only as a metaphor—and a risky one at that, unless carefully explained—as is evident from the words of St. Thomas quoted above (and in fact from our own common sense).

At this point the objection will occur to some that such a theory of obedience opens the door to anarchy and unbridled individualism. If one must obey only when he judges he should, is not this equivalent to saying that whenever he disagrees with a command he need not obey it? Not at all. This is to miss the point of the distinction made by St. Thomas. One is



not supposed to judge whether he agrees with the command or would have given it himself. He has only to judge on whether it is a legitimate command, coming from a legitimate authority, falling within the scope of that authority, and, of course, not itself sinful. Then he should obey, whether he agrees personally with the wisdom of the command or not.

But, the objector will insist, in difficult borderline cases, who is to judge whether a bishop or pastor or even the Pope has overstepped the limits of his authority? If it is left to the individual to judge in his own case, are not order and authority at the mercy of the will of each individual?

Not quite. The judgment must be made by the individuals concerned, it is true, and they cannot hand over this responsibility to anyone else, least of all to the authority itself that is commanding them. But the objection overlooks the fact that the individuals involved have the obligation to make their judgment according to a basic disposition of goodwill, readiness to obey, and the sincere desire to be guided toward their ultimate goal by the legitimate representatives of God on earth. In case of doubt, such an attitude will on principle give the benefit of the doubt to authority.

Does this not leave the commands of authority dependent on the intelligence and goodwill of the individual? It does. There cannot be any authentic obedience without the necessary complement of free, responsible judgment in the one obeying. Genuine obedience can always be frustrated either by irresponsible docility at one extreme or by deliberate bad will at the other. Does all exercise of authority, then, even by the Church, involve a certain risk? Certainly; this is the human condition and we must put up with it.

Does this mean that there is no certain rule-of-thumb formula for deciding difficult borderline cases? Certainly. There is no infallible rule of thumb, no ready-made solution to fit all cases; there is no book in which one can find all the answers. One must face the challenge of each case anew, using the past as a guide. There is no automatic, impersonal substitute for the risk of responsible personal judgment. No other virtue can usurp the function of prudence. Hence obedience can never replace the personal responsibility of the individual conscience for its own actions; it can only assist it to guide itself more surely to its destined goal. If individual leaders in the Church occasionally forget this in the exercise of their power, the Church herself does not. Her constant teaching on obedience shows rather that she wishes all of her sons and daughters to assume the basic responsibility—and therefore risk—of being human.<sup>4</sup>

Authority and private judgment in the Church, therefore, are not two opposing forces at war with each other. They are rather two essentially complementary forces which must always remain joined in vital tension within the life of the Church. Authority would be a violation of human dignity unless it were received and responded to by responsible “private” judgment. Private judgment would be unable to discover and respond to God’s plans unless it freely opened itself to the illumination and guidance of authority from above, channeled, as He willed it, through other human beings, in the social framework of the Church.

Is this authority always exercised in the Church wisely,

4. It is a pleasure to note a lucid expression of the same idea of risk and personal responsibility in obedience by a Catholic layman: Daniel Callahan, “Freedom and Authority,” *Christianity and Crisis*, Oct. 3, 1960; reprinted in *Catholic Mind*, 59 (March–April, 1961), 172–178.

prudently, and with paternal suavity and gentleness? Certainly not. It would be romantic unrealism to pretend otherwise. Nor do we deserve or have any right to expect such perfection in this life. The Church in this life is composed of imperfect and sinful members from the bottom all the way to the top. Just as the obedience of the ordinary faithful is often defective, lukewarm, and plain cantankerous, so too the exercise of authority is bound to show its share of imperfections.

But the mature Catholic is willing to put up with these imperfections in order to hold fast to that pearl of great price which comes with them and cannot be had apart from them—the revelation of our eternal destiny and of God's own means for achieving it. To reject a divinely established authority simply because of the risk it involves and the imperfections that accompany it would be irresponsible.

Futhermore, just as it is the role of authority to enlighten and guide the intellects and wills of the members of the Church, so it is part of the role of private judgment to exert a moderating and balancing influence on the exercise of authority. Though it may surprise both Catholics and non-Catholics to hear it, the late Pope Pius XII himself, in his address to the International Press Conference in Rome in 1950, explicitly urged the development of a more mature and articulate "public opinion" in the Church:

Public opinion is the mark of every normal society composed of men who, conscious of their personal and social conduct, are intimately concerned with the community to which they belong. When all is said and done, public opinion is everywhere the natural echo, the common resounding, more or less spontaneous, of events and the present situation in man's mind and judgment. Where public opinion fails to manifest itself, where it does not exist at all—whatever the reason for its silence

or absence—one must see in this lack something vicious, a malady, a disease of social life. . . . Finally we should like to add a word regarding public opinion within the bosom of the Church (naturally, with respect to matters left to free discussion). This consideration can surprise only those who do not know the Church or know her only poorly. Because the Church is a living body, something would be wanting in her life if public opinion were lacking—and the blame for this deficiency would fall back upon the pastors and the faithful.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of such public opinion in the Church is not, of course, either to dictate its belief or take over its disciplinary power from below. It performs rather the triple function of (1) acting as check against the exceeding of the limits of their authority by the leaders in the Church, especially at the local level; (2) directing the attention of authority to new needs and new possibilities of developing the inner resources of the Church; and (3) applying the Church's general teaching to the particular areas of modern life in which the members are actively engaged and have more firsthand knowledge than is possible to those in the clerical vocation.

It is evident that such public opinion can be provided only by a mature, educated, and articulate laity, imbued both with a sense of filial devotion and docility to the Church and also with a sense of their own dignity, freedom, and responsibility as sons and daughters of God at home within their Father's house. The cultivation of such a spirit and its fruits among the Catholic laity is certainly one of the outstanding needs—and hopes—of the Church today.

To sum up, authority and private judgment are not an

5. Address of Pope Pius XII to the International Press Congress, Feb. 18, 1950; reprinted in *Catholic Mind*, 48 (Dec. 1950), 749, 753. Cf. also the courageous essay of Karl Rahner, S.J., *Free Speech in the Church* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1959).

“either-or” alternative within the Catholic Church, but a fruitful marriage between two essentially complementary partners, neither of which can do without the other. The living dialogue between them is one of the richest sources of the Church’s vitality.



# THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE

Robert W. Gleason, S.J.

ONE cannot deny that Catholic interpretations of sacred Scripture have, in the past, constituted a major roadblock to the Protestant understanding of Catholicism. Today, however, the situation has changed considerably and far more cordial relations now exist between Catholic and Protestant Scripture scholars.

In the last half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, Protestant biblical scholars generally enveloped themselves in an atmosphere of philosophical and theological skepticism that evoked little sympathy in Catholic milieus. The liberal Protestant exegesis of this period, while often of great technical value, was so marred by liberal presuppositions that it could not be reconciled with Catholic dogma. At first, opposition to traditional dogma was sharp, and the reaction of

the conservative Catholic group was just as sharp, at times even rigid. Wellhausen's work on the Pentateuch created bitter controversy. Uniting, as it did, a valuable and detailed literary criticism of the Pentateuch with a naturalistic religious criticism, it met with unfavorable reception at the hands of Catholic authorities. Its presumption that Israel's religion had evolved from a primitive monolatry to monotheism by a purely natural immanent process, and its dismissal of any idea of a divine revelation or of a divine intervention in favor of the people of Israel undermined the religious concept of the Old Testament which Protestant and Catholic scholars had for centuries held in common.<sup>1</sup>

The hypercritical approach to the Pentateuch was paralleled by a similar approach to other books of the Old Testament. Myth was discovered everywhere; with the advances of archeology and the renewed study of ancient literature, parallels were discovered between biblical narratives and Assyrian or Babylonian legends. Some scholars in the Protestant camp promptly deduced that legends were rife in the Old Testament and the patriarchs simply astral or Canaanite deities appropriated by the authors of the Old Testament. With the historical value of much of the Old Testament thus called in doubt or openly rejected, Catholic exegetes, who accepted the Bible as the inspired word of God, were quite naturally disturbed.

The situation was even more acute with regard to New Testament studies. Liberal Protestantism attacked the fundamental historicity and veracity of the Gospels themselves with all sorts of charges, most of which are now quite out of date.

1. See J. Levie, *La Bible, parole humaine et message de dieu*, Paris, 1958, Ch. 2, for a more general history of the period.



In the liberal thinking of that day none of the four Gospels was supposed to have been written by its traditional author, and all were said to be of later date than had been thought. "The Christ of history" was opposed to "the Christ of faith." The divinity of Christ and the supernatural character of His mission was called into doubt or denied outright. The Gospel miracles were legends. Christ was a mere man, if He existed at all, and the skepticism of liberal Protestantism ended in doubting even this, fantastic as it seems today.

By the time of World War I a reaction had begun in Protestant thought and most of these extraordinary positions were no longer popular. Catholic exegetes had, of course, never accepted them. But controversies had provoked an increased interest in biblical research within the Church. J. Levie points out that in the period from 1890 to 1914, Catholic exegetes could be divided roughly into three groups: (1) the conservatives, who felt that traditional Catholic solutions to biblical questions were quite adequate and who simply repudiated the whole mass of Protestant critical exegesis as skeptical and irreligious; (2) the moderates, who chose to distinguish the solid literary, critical, and historical results of Protestant scholarship from its naturalistic and skeptical presuppositions; (3) the modernists, who gradually detached themselves from the Catholic faith in an effort to come to closer terms with liberal criticism.<sup>2</sup> It was the second group who formed the basis upon which much excellent work is being done by contemporary scholars.

There was also among Protestant scholars a return to more traditional positions in exegesis. As early as 1900 Harnack had

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

suggested a movement back to tradition. By the end of the First World War Protestantism was engaged in an effort to grasp again the *religious* treasury of Protestantism, of Luther and the Reform: and, in so doing, of renovating what the reformer retained of the ancient Christian heritage. Karl Barth marked a definite return to a dogmatic Protestantism and his writings had notable influence on German, and indeed world-wide, Protestant theological thought. E. Brunner and F. Gogarten contributed to this movement, as did J. Jeremias, P. Althaus, and many others including W. Eichrodt and O. Cullmann. In English-speaking countries the work of W. F. Albright, H. Rowley, and M. Burrows marked an advance in the same direction. An increased study of the archeological remains and the Hebrew milieu of the sacred writers helped to create a firmer understanding of their thought patterns.

In Catholic thought advances were made which consolidated traditional positions while nuancing them. *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* and *Lamentabile sine Exitu* had warned Catholic exegetes of the dangers of modernism and effectively put an end to modernist tendencies within the Church. But the Church was not content with signaling the dangers to be avoided. In his encyclical *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum Principis*, Benedict XV made it clear that the excessively narrow mentality of certain intransigent reactionaries did not represent the official views of the Church. The Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* urged an increased study of oriental languages on the part of Catholics, and put an end to concordism: the naïve effort to make the statements of Scripture predict or agree with the finding of the natural sciences. Scripture, Leo XIII pointed

out, did not intend to instruct man on natural science. Not until Pius XII's Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, however, did Catholic scripture studies receive full impetus. In this masterly letter, Pius XII gave the greatest encouragement to Catholic scripture studies. Two fundamental principles were laid down. The first was that the supreme goal of scriptural interpretation is to discover precisely what the inspired author *meant* to say.

This could be learned through the application of the allied sciences of archeology, psychology, and so forth. One must study the inspired authors' background, the Semitic thought-patterns and mentality which he shares with other Near-Eastern people. Pius XII also gave formal approval to the use of "literary forms" in interpreting the sacred text. Thus the Bible can contain many different literary forms, provided these do not contradict the truthfulness and holiness of the author. Poetry, epic history, salvation-history, didactic lessons, Midrash, pious and edifying stories—none of these is a priori excluded from the Sacred Scriptures.

As the second principle Pius XII stated that very few texts have had their meaning authoritatively declared by the Church. Catholic scholars had always been aware that the interpretations of the early Christian fathers were of a peculiar value in the study of Scripture. Pius XII again strongly recommended to scripture scholars the extensive study of the Fathers.

However, since the Fathers did not possess the apparatus of the present-day scholar, a contemporary exegete could licitly disagree with their scriptural interpretations, provided that his reasons for doing so were weighty. Unless the patristic tradi-

tion with regard to a text is constant, morally universal, and acts as a witness to revealed truth, it would seem that patristic interpretation has somewhat the same value as the arguments adduced in its favor. Unhesitatingly, Pius XII admitted the greater technical perfection of modern erudition and the more developed arts of modern scholarship.

One of the greatest advances sanctioned by Pius XII was precisely his approval of the method of literary genres or forms in the study of Sacred Scripture.<sup>3</sup> The study of literary forms is not a device to permit the modern exegete to develop subjective views concerning Scripture but an *objective search* for the genuine intentions of the sacred author: what he intended to affirm and how he affirmed it. The method attempts to study the sacred author's milieu, his culture, possible sources, the special fashion in which he conceived his writing, the purpose guiding his thought and expression, and the particular literary form he used to embody it, that is, whether his work be poetry, epic, poetic history, "strict" history, and so on. It is an effort to understand the author's literal meaning: what he intended to say. Consequently, in approving this method Pius XII wished to underscore the need for a more thoroughly objective study of men of another period and culture in their concrete milieu, with the limitations of their cultural, and even their moral and religious development. The expert is to attempt, for example, to discover the literary genre and to uncover the precise degree of historical affirmation intended: presumably the author chose a particular literary form with a view to making clear his purpose. Since the human author is a man of a particular char-

3. P. Lobe, "Les genres littéraires dans la Bible," *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1955, pp. 649-655.

acter, temperament, culture, and taste, the literary genre will also reflect this to some degree.<sup>4</sup>

St. Thomas' notion of biblical inspiration implies that the human author *contributed something* to the book. He is not used by God as an inert, passive instrument without character or freedom. God spoke to us through the concrete individual and the study of the literary form this man employed will assist us to appreciate his message. This approval of literary genres by Pius XII is, of course, open to the danger of abuse. Ill-informed students may commit in its name all sorts of imprudences, labeling as legend, myth, fiction, and pious fable every section of the Bible that presents difficulties. But the principle is sound and the pope showed confidence in the integrity, scholarship, and discretion of the exegete.

The encouragement given by *Divino Afflante Spiritu* was further accented by two other Roman documents which though less important, greatly aided the Church's progressive approach to scripture studies. In 1948 the secretary of the Biblical Commission, Fr. J. M. Vosté, replied to certain questions of Cardinal Suhard concerning the date of the documents of the Pentateuch and the literary genre of the first eleven chapters of *Genesis*. The reply did not purport to give a clear solution to these difficult problems, but its forthrightness encouraged the progressive movement. It admitted the fact, long proposed by scholars, that Moses had used sources for his writing; that successive editings and additions had taken place. With regard to the literary form of the first eleven chapters of *Genesis*, it stated clearly that these chapters do not correspond to *any* of

4. V. L. Schökel, "Dove va l'esegesi cattolica," *Civiltà cattolica*, 1960, pp. 449-460, and J. Fitzmyer, "A recent Roman scriptural controversy," *Theological Studies*, 1961, pp. 426-444.

our classic categories and cannot be judged in the light of modern or Graeco-Latin literary genres. It urged exegetes to take into account the literary, scientific, historical, cultural, and religious problems connected with these chapters; to study the literary procedures of ancient oriental peoples, their psychology, their ways of expression, and even their notion of historical truth. It pointed out that these chapters related, in a simple and figurative language, the fundamental truths presupposed in an economy of salvation and gave a popular description of the origin of the human race. The fact that these recitals are not history *in the modern sense* of the word does not imply that they do not contain historical truth.

This document is especially noteworthy for the encouragement it gives to exegetes to study ancient Eastern culture, its psychology and literary forms.

Further encouragement to modern biblical scholars was embodied in two articles which appeared on the occasion of the new edition of the *Enchiridion Biblicum* in 1955. Fr. Athanasius Miller, Secretary of the Biblical Commission, and Fr. A. Kleinhans, Under-Secretary of the same group, were the authors of these articles.<sup>5</sup> Given the writers' positions, the articles had particular weight. While underscoring the importance of Sacred Scripture in the Church and the deference that must be granted to decrees of the Biblical Commission, the authors stated that full liberty was granted to exegetes to continue scientific research in disputed areas. They referred to the difficult times in which the Commission had issued so many of its responses, the crisis of modernism, and implied that the

5. Cited by Levie, *op. cit.*, p. 216. The article of Fr. Miller appeared in *Benediktinische Monatschrift*, 1955, pp. 49 ff.; that of Fr. Kleinhans in *Antonianum*, 1955, pp. 64 ff.

present situation of the Church left today's exegetes a greater liberty than scholars of past decades had enjoyed, always, of course, subject to the authority of the Church. Certain points, which formerly could not have been prudently discussed, could now be examined.

Along with this encouragement scripture scholars profited from the immense advances that have taken place in archeological research during the last forty and especially the last twenty years. Research into ancient Near-Eastern culture helped scholars to understand the Bible better by enabling them to place it more fully in its surroundings. Excavations brought new manuscripts to light. Moreover, patristic studies underwent a new impetus, sometimes benefiting from the discovery of lost manuscripts. As a result exegetes became more capable of understanding the oriental style of thinking and of writing. After World War I various national schools of archeology explored the Near East and made possible a greater understanding of the concrete milieu and culture of the Bible. To mention but a few discoveries, the manuscripts of Ras Shamra and those of the Judean desert helped to give scholars a firsthand grasp of the culture in which the Bible was written.

The result of this ferment was a signal advance in Catholic scripture studies. It is unfortunate that this advance has sometimes been presented as though it were a revolutionary break with the past. This is not true, since some of the positions taken more recently are further developments of ideas developed by earlier scholars.

In presenting some of these later developments, we would like to underscore several points to avoid misunderstanding: (1) Many of these newer solutions to Scriptural problems are

only *tentative*; some scholars accept them, others, equally competent, reject them, either because the evidence as yet is insufficient, or because the more recent solutions create difficulties of their own, either exegetical or dogmatic. Many are still in the stage of opinion, and their value rests solely on the validity of the arguments adduced to support them. Others have gained considerable favor with a large number of scholars, but may still be subject to revision, refinement, and so on. (2) It should be clear that the efforts of modern scripture scholars is a *positive* one. They are attempting to gain a deeper and more authentic understanding of the scriptural message. We state this because popularizations have at times made their work seem more destructive than constructive, as though they were more interested in tearing down inadequate solutions than in suggesting valid answers to complex problems. Such a presentation would be unfair since the scholars are usually responsible men. In many cases their results have been submitted to the learned public in the form of possible *hypotheses*, not of assured results, and it would be unjust to present them as certain or definitive. Most of the newer solutions are still being discussed and debated. (3) In a chapter as short as this it is clearly impossible to present many of the newer positions in scripture scholarship without running the risk of misleading the general reader through excessive brevity. Hence we have restricted ourselves to the more generally accepted advances and have tried to give some bibliographical material as an aid in exploring the problem at greater length and in appreciating the nuances of a difficult and complex solution, which may be inadequately summarized here. (4) Exegetes have obviously not adopted new solutions to old problems for the sake of



novelty; they have good reasons for proposing their new positions. Since the lengthy, detailed argumentation for even *one* new position would make a chapter very much longer than our limits permit, we can only suggest that the serious reader consult the bibliography for a more technical exposition of any one problem.

It is important also to note that all Catholic scripture scholars *without exception* agree that Scripture is the inspired word of God and is to be treated accordingly with prudence and reverence. All, *without exception*, regard the Scriptures as inerrant, absolutely devoid of error, and none of them calls into question their historical value.

Once we have noted these cautions we may also observe with legitimate pleasure the considerable advances that Catholic exegesis has made in this century. Scholars today admit that Catholic scripture scholarship had evidenced a decline during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Catholic scholars of the times were largely on the defensive, as well they might have been, considering the prevailing opinions among non-Catholic scholars, many of which were contrary to the most fundamental Christian dogmas. It is possible also that during that period some Catholic scholars did not sufficiently distinguish the essential from the accidental and undertook too strenuously to defend positions really outdated, under the impression that these were more traditional or "orthodox."

When Pius XII sanctioned the use of literary forms to interpret the Bible, scholars renewed their examination of the books of the Old and the New Testaments and suggested that in many cases the Bible's message would be clearer if we adopted as a guiding principle the fact that the Bible contained

various types of literature, all inspired and all without error, but differing in nature, scope, and spirit. Modern scholars generally admit that besides historical books the Bible also contains many other types of literature such as poetry, parables, and even didactic fiction.

Let us consider, as an example, the book of Jonas. Today a growing consensus of authorities accepts the book as didactic in nature: the author uses his fictional account of Jonas and the great fish to show that God is merciful to the repentant sinner and to point out that His mercy is not restricted to the Jews, but extends even to the enemies of His people, even to Nineveh—the equivalent, at that period of history, of modern Moscow.

In the nineteenth century some Catholic scholars made every effort to prove that this book was history in the strictest modern sense, contriving to make a very plausible defense of the improbabilities in the story. (*Whatever* literary form the book of Jonas may be, whether didactic fiction, parable, or strict history, the inerrancy of Scripture and the inspiration of the book are not touched. Inspiration or inerrancy does not *demand* a particular literary form and excludes only the forms unsuited to the veracity and sanctity of Holy Writ.) A. Jones outlines the debate rather succinctly.<sup>6</sup> Those who claim that the book is fully historical note that contacts between Israel and Assyria did take place during the lifetime of Jonas; that the description of Nineveh's character is historically accurate; that sackcloth and ashes, even for cattle, were not unknown or fantastic in those days; that although we have no historical records of Nineveh's conversion, our records are incomplete in

6. A. Jones, *Unless Some Man Show Me*, New York, 1951, Chapter VI.

any case. The sperm whale is a large "fish" and has on one occasion been found with a ten-foot shark in his belly, indicating that perhaps Jonas could have rested there also. The "great fish" is not impossible. Nor would his speed, or lack thereof, make it impossible for him to deliver Jonas to the "dry land" of the narrative, for the Bible does not say that Jonas was delivered to Nineveh's doorstep.

On the other hand those who consider the book a piece of didactic fiction see the story as a beautiful parable of God's mercy. They believe that the sacred author has adopted the form of historical fiction to teach this lesson. They point out that the book of Jonas has always caused difficulties for those who considered it purely historical. Augustine had already noted this; some of the Fathers seemed to accept Jonas as an allegory because of these difficulties. The "great fish" certainly offers a few improbabilities, but, of course, both sides agree, a miracle could take care of that. But to some, the entire story seems touched with a note of fantasy which indicated that the author was not writing history. They point out that the story has a vagueness of detail that is characteristic of the parable or of fiction. We never learn exactly how Jonas made his way to Nineveh, or the name of Nineveh's king. A certain studied, artistic indifference to precise detail permeates the recital.

Whatever position one adopts it is clear that neither side of the Jonas debate in any way calls into question the fact that the book is inspired, is God's word, and is free from error. The two sides differ only on the literary form in which the author chose to cast his moral message. Is it history or is it a story?

Scholars have also pointed out that Scripture uses a variety of literary forms and that these should be interpreted according to the norms of the epoch in which they were written.<sup>7</sup> If God chose to use a human author who was an Oriental, is there any reason to suppose that He equipped him with the thought patterns of an Occidental? Is there any reason why He should have? If God chose a human author of an earlier cultural period, should he have made him look at things in the manner of twentieth century man? Why not as a medieval man, or as a man of 3000 A.D.? In the Bible we find many literary forms, some of which are familiar to us and some unfamiliar. We find funeral hymns and marriage songs, books of proverbs, love songs, parables, fables with a moral lesson attached, prophecy, and, above all, history.

Within the genus of history we even find various types of history. Some books present us with a moral lesson or a philosophical thesis under the guise of what appears to be history: we have already discussed this with regard to the book of Jonas.<sup>8</sup> Some exegetes consider that the book of Job is really a discourse on the problem of evil and suffering, edited in the form of a dialogue between Job and his friends, even though that dialogue may never have taken place. Job may have been a well known historical figure in Israel, admired for his stead-

7. On literary genres it would be worthwhile to consult A. Robert and A. Tricot, *Initiation biblique*, Paris, 1954, Ch. VI. Also the various Introductions to the Bible, such as F. Moriarity, *Introducing the Old Testament*, Milwaukee, 1959, and *Foreword to the Old Testament Books*, Weston, 1954; J. Dougherty, *Searching the Scriptures*, New York, 1959; C. Charlier, *The Christian Approach to the Bible*, Westminster, 1958. J. McKenzie, *The Two-Edged Sword*, Milwaukee, 1955, also deals with the problem. A. Robert and A. Feuillet, *Introduction à la bible*, Paris, 1960, is also of value.

8. See Also A. Feuillet, *Le Livre de Jonas*, Paris, 1951, Introduction, pp. 10-15.

fastness, when the inspired author chose him as the central figure about which he built his study of the problem.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars, too, believe that the artistic, even artificial arrangement of the materials of the book of Tobias places it in the class of didactic fiction rather than history properly so called; around a historical nucleus the sacred author could have woven his story and pointed out the moral lessons he wanted to teach.<sup>10</sup> If this be the case, neither inspiration nor inerrancy is at stake; the inspired author, under God's influence, chose this literary form as an apt means for expressing the truth he intended; his intention need not have been to affirm the historical character of each and every detail, but the affirmations he does make are *true*. Whatever affirmations he is making about history are determined by the type of history he is writing.

Nowadays we are familiar with "historical" novels. We are aware that the authors feel free to alter history somewhat, and so are not surprised that they have chosen as their literary form not history, but the historical *novel*. The author of *Gone With the Wind* would have been quite startled if one accepted her novel as a *history* of the South during the Civil War. The inspired author of the Bible should also be interpreted according to his chosen literary form.

Still another art form is to be found in the Scriptures, according to many Catholic exegetes, the art form we might call "edifying history or biography." Today we are quite used to biographies of historical figures which admittedly do not pre-

9. J. Steinmann, *Job*, Paris, 1946, pp. 7-18; E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Job*, New York, 1946, Introduction, p. xiv, and C. Larcher, *Le Livre de Job*, Paris, 1957, Introduction, pp. 7-28.

10. R. Pautrel, *Tobie*, Paris, 1957, pp. 12-13.

sent a *complete* picture of the subject. Unpleasant or ugly features of the hero's personality are passed over in silence to highlight his great achievements, and so on. Similarly in Sacred Scripture, we may find narrations that freely omit details that would have scandalized the author's contemporaries. It is possible, according to some authorities, that the book of Chronicles omits from its historical narrative a good number of historical facts, and interprets others in an anachronistic fashion, reading present situations back into the past. The exegete's task here is to determine precisely what degree of historical truth the author is *intending* to affirm. The author of Chronicles is above all interested in the history of the priesthood, the cult, the temple. Viewing the past as the history of the observance of the law by the chosen people, he describes past events in terms of contemporary history. To obtain a just appreciation of the author's affirmations, his purpose would therefore have to be kept in mind.

Basic to the entire theory of literary genres is the axiom that the type of truth embodied in a book depends mainly on the author's purpose, and this purpose can usually be determined by studying the literary genre employed. In "edifying history" the author's aim is to edify; he feels free to suppress certain details, to highlight others; he chooses the historical facts that are pertinent to his purpose and he may even modify the words, deeds, and characters of his historic personages to obtain this end. In a deliberately free account of history, something which amounts to historical fiction, the author selects certain historical facts and about this core he weaves a fictional account to make his point clear.<sup>11</sup> Certain Old Testament authorities have taken

11. H. Cazelles, *Les Livres de Chroniques*, Paris, 1954, Introduction, pp. 7-28.

the books of Esther and Judith as examples of this literary form. History and facts are adapted to a religious point of view, to convey a moral lesson, to point up a truth.<sup>12</sup>

Another literary type found in the Bible is "popular traditions." At times these resemble folklore, being part racial or family reminiscence, part poetry, and part history. Consequently, it is a difficult task to separate the imaginative dressing from the historical background in this type of writing. It has been suggested, for instance, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis may belong to this style of writing. A certain number of details in these chapters must be taken as historical; the framework may be "mythical" in the sense of a special imaginative literary setting given to the basic truths of Creation, the Fall, the promise of the Redeemer, and so forth. The history of the patriarchs may be another example of this literary genre (Gen. XI-L). Popular or ancestral traditions, however, are not devoid of historical value; they are not simply myth. Recent archeological discoveries have often shown us that they should be taken more seriously than earlier scholars thought.

If the sections of Genesis which we have mentioned fall into this genre, then the intention of the inspired author could perhaps be formulated somewhat as follows, "I am giving you here the ancestral traditions of Israel; facts may have been simplified, regrouped about certain great personalities, and some elements in the story are only freely historical, but the essential lessons pointed out, the great lines of the traditions, are historically true." Certainly this genre of "popular traditions" existed in Israel and in other Near-Eastern cultures. For example, one can find creation accounts in Near-Eastern litera-

12. R. P. Barucq, *Judith, Esther*, Paris, 1952, pp. 77-80; J. Steinmann, *Lecture de Judith*, Paris, 1953, pp. 13 ff.

ture that show some similarity with the scriptural account, but which also have a very large share of the fantastic. If God permitted the inspired author to use popular traditions in communicating His message, then He would be adopting for a primitive people the type of expression they best understood and in which His message of salvation, of election, of the Messiah to come, could be best expressed. The book would reveal the historical actions of God intervening to form a chosen people and would be written under divine guidance and inspiration to express these truths accurately and intelligibly.

Another genre which is difficult to locate exactly in the Bible is that of Midrash Haggada, a moral instruction based upon facts of Biblical history. Some Catholic authors think the book of Judith to be an example of this literary form. If one takes the book as "strict" history, insurmountable difficulties have to be solved. Hence, some believe, this book is a very free treatment of a historical episode whose main purpose is to point out a moral lesson. Some authors also include the book of Esther in this genre. As a matter of fact, this style of literature became very common in the later period of Jewish history and is found frequently in the Talmud. It developed from an oral commentary on the Old Testament and often was similar to a sermon-commentary on Scripture. Its purpose was much more to edify than to teach history. The art displayed is rather that of a preacher or a storyteller than of a historian.<sup>13</sup>

Authorities have suggested that "epic history," a literary form perhaps unfamiliar to modern readers, may also be found in the Bible. In this type of history the writer feels free to add new characters and events to the historical situation under

13. J. Levie, *op. cit.*, p. 256.



discussion. For example, it may be that the plagues that attacked Egypt were added by the writer who was describing the historical event of the Exodus. We should not demand that the primitive Near-Eastern concept of history be identical with that of modern man, demanding a critical examination of documents and witnesses, locating events precisely regarding time and place. The ancient Orientals did not use the same forms as we to express their ideas and it is not unreasonable that the sacred author used the literary forms he and his people best understood.

To determine the genre of a particular book of the Bible is, of course, a difficult and delicate task. Minute investigation of the book, philologically and exegetically, continued study of profane history and literature, comparison with parallels in profane literature are all necessary. A careful study of the whole literature of the Near East is needed and here especially recent discoveries and new manuscripts are of great value. Then, too, an entire book need not belong to one genre. The Church has, of course, the decisive word in determining the genre of a book. Until she pronounces judgment, scholars continue to study the ancient literature of the East and oriental psychology, ethnology, history, and archeology.

Much of the progress of Catholic scripture studies today is due to this careful examination of literary genres. Today's scholars, to be sure, enjoy much more freedom than their predecessors in this regard. In 1893, *Providentissimus Deus* made no mention of this scholarly principle. In 1905, a reply of the Biblical Commission cautiously admitted that the study of literary genres might be of some use in solving particular problems. *Spiritus Paraclitus* admitted their legitimate use but condemned

excesses in their regard and insisted that certain genres, such as pure myth, are excluded from the Scriptures by the nature of the case. It was Pius XII who first gave wholehearted endorsement to the use of literary forms. In *Humani Generis* the same Pope made it clear, however, that popular historical accounts are not to be placed on the same level as myth; he also reminded exegetes in this encyclical that scriptural inerrance is not restricted to religious or moral truths, and bade them to take into account the whole of the Christian faith in their interpretation, to be aware of the value of tradition. The dogmatic tradition of the Church is not to be modified to bring it into accord with a private exegete's opinion, but vice versa. In this encyclical he again insisted that the literal sense of Scripture, the sense intended by the author, constitutes the basis of sound exegesis.

The general tenor of Pius XII's writings on Scripture has greatly encouraged the exegete: it marked a great act of confidence on the part of the Church in the professional scripture scholar. And the result has justified this confidence.

It is to be hoped that the continued research of both Catholic and Protestant scholars may produce greater mutual understanding not only among professional scholars, but among the great body of Christians who hold the scripture in supreme reverence as God's revealed word.

# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND BIRTH CONTROL <sup>1</sup>

Joseph S. Duhamel, S.J.

IN recent years there has arisen a renewed interest in the problems connected with birth control—an interest brought about by several factors.<sup>1</sup>

First, we have been living in a world of changing ideas about sex morality in general, where ever greater sexual freedom is the demand and, to a large extent, the practice. Yet, in the midst of what Pitrim Sorokin has called "The American Sex Revolution," the Catholic Church stands unmoved on certain rock-bottom principles concerning the virtue of chastity.

1. For the matter presented here, I must express my indebtedness especially to three authors: Stanislas de Lestapis, S.J., *La Limitation des naissances* (Paris: Spes, 1960); Paul M. Quay, S.J., "Contraception and Conjugal Love," *Theological Studies*, 22 (1961), pp. 18-40; John C. Ford, S.J., "Marriage: Its Meaning and Purpose," *Theological Studies*, 3 (1942), pp. 333-374.

Secondly, there has been a change in the views about the morality of birth control itself. This change was graphically illustrated last year in the second televised panel discussion about the population explosion. When Bishop James Pike quoted the Lambeth Conference in favor of birth control, Father Theodore Hesburgh could also quote the Lambeth Conference as condemning birth control, for as late as 1920, the Lambeth Conference still adhered to the traditional and unequivocal Christian condemnation of this practice. Late in February, 1961, the National Council of Churches in the United States for the first time put its seal of approval on the use of contraceptive practices. Today, the Catholic Church has not changed with the trend and says it never will change.

In the third place, new antifertility drugs have been put on the market that make the practice of contraception a simple matter of a pill taken orally from the fifth to the twenty-fifth day of each menstrual cycle. This discovery has been hailed as a benefit to mankind by almost everyone except the Catholic Church, which has condemned use of such pills as direct contraceptive sterilization when they are taken to suppress ovulation in order to prevent conception.

As a fourth element, we may quote some words of Pius XII from an Allocution given on November 26, 1951. Speaking of circumstances in which the limitation of family size would be morally justified, and observing that the practice of periodic continence by the rhythm method would be morally unobjectionable in those circumstances, he added: "One may even hope (but in this matter, the Church leaves the judgment to medical science) that science may succeed in giving to this legitimate

method a sufficiently secure basis. The most recent information seems to confirm this hope." In this instance, the position of the Church usually occasions some such remark as this: "Well, we both agree that there are morally justifiable grounds for limiting the number of children and for spacing their arrival. We differ only on the methods, and it is the motives rather than the methods that constitute the moral issue. Besides, our methods are more effective than yours."

Finally, there has been the explosive question of population expansion. Again, while not denying that the problem exists in some regions of the world and while suggesting other means for its solution, the Catholic Church has declared that artificial birth control, even if it were proved to be a significantly effective means, could not be a legitimate means of reducing world population or curtailing its increase.

I mention these elements because it is within the ambience of changing moral views on such problems that the Catholic must lead his social, business, professional, cultural, and religious life in this country. At each of these levels he finds himself in conflict with a large proportion of his fellow countrymen because of certain intransigent positions of that Church which he believes to be the Church of Christ and whose authority to teach in matters of morals as well as of faith he acknowledges. Yet he may wonder, at times, why his Church cannot adapt its teaching to changed modern circumstances. In such difficult interpersonal relationships, it may help the interior peace of the Catholic if he has some understanding of the unchanging and unchangeable principles of reason and revelation on which the Church bases its teaching. It will also help if he can gain some insight

into the prophetic role of the Church, a city built on a mountain-top, a light in darkness and a sign of truth, although often a sign of contradiction—as was Christ, its founder.

Before beginning the justification of the Church's position, we must determine precisely what it is that the Church has officially condemned, namely, this practice to which we usually give the name of artificial birth control.

On this subject the Great Charter of the Catholic Church is the Encyclical, "Chaste Marriage," given by Pius XI on December 31, 1930. We read:

Since, then, the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose, sin against nature and commit an act which is shameful and intrinsically evil.

Since, therefore, openly departing from the uninterrupted Christian tradition some recently have judged it possible to declare solemnly another doctrine regarding this question, the Catholic Church to whom God has entrusted the defence of the integrity and purity of morals . . . raises her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through our mouth proclaims anew: any use whatsoever of marriage exercised in such a way that the act is deprived, by human artifice, of its inherent power to generate new life is an offence against the law of God and nature, and those who indulge in it are branded with the guilt of grave sin.

In his Allocution to Obstetrical Nurses on October 29, 1951, Pius XII used somewhat different words in his condemnation of birth control, but explicitly said that he was merely repeating the doctrine proclaimed by his predecessor:

Our predecessor, Pius XI, of happy memory, in his Encyclical, "Chaste Marriage," proclaimed anew in solemn manner the fundamental law of the conjugal act and of conjugal relationships: that any attempt of husband and wife to deprive this act of its inherent force and to impede the procreation of new life, either in the performance of the act itself or in the course of the development of its natural consequences, is im-

moral; and no "indication" or need can convert an intrinsically immoral act into a moral and lawful one. This precept is valid today as it was yesterday; and it will be the same tomorrow and always, because it does not imply a precept of human law, but it is an expression of a law that is natural and divine.

At this point, two basic observations must be made. The type of contraceptive practice condemned by the Church is usually called "artificial birth control." This is simply a question of terminology to distinguish clearly the illegitimate means of limiting the family size from the justified practice of periodic continence. But the objection to contraceptive practices is not based upon the fact that they are "artificial." That, of itself, is not the norm of morality in this or in other matters. A hearing aid is artificial, but we do not condemn its use for that reason.

Secondly, in the Papal documents contraceptive practices are condemned because "they are contrary to the law of God and nature." The reference to the law of nature is to a law of God that differs from other divine laws only by reason of the manner in which it is promulgated. One source of our knowledge of God's will is His revelation, as found in scripture and tradition. But revelation is not the only source of truth. A study of human nature itself, if taken in its completeness with all its internal and external relationships and in conjunction with revelation, is another way in which we can learn God's will about how human beings should direct and govern their actions. This study reveals the natural law, which is God's own law promulgated to man by the light of reason.

A complete explanation of the natural law is impossible here. Briefly, however, the nature of man is simply his essence, the way he is essentially constituted, looked upon as his ultimate principle of operation. The natural law is the statement of the

inner principles of action, placed in man by God in making man what he is, and demanded by the very nature of man so that his human activity may direct him to that perfection which is proper to his human nature.

It is important to note that, even for the understanding of the natural law, the Catholic has the firm guidance of the Church to shield him from error. Very few principles of the natural law are immediately evident. When one reaches the field of remote conclusions deduced from general principles of the natural law—and birth control certainly pertains to such remote conclusions—the possibility of error grows greater. Moreover, when there is question of a prohibition of the natural law which touches human beings in a matter in which there is personal emotional involvement, when its observance demands personal sacrifice and, at times, heroic virtue, it is not difficult to realize that personal interest can easily pose a barrier between the principle and its remote conclusion. Although the Church has taught that it is possible to arrive at the natural truths about religion and morals by the use of reason alone, she has also taught that the help of revelation is necessary in order that all may arrive at such truths readily, with real certitude, and with no admixture of error.

The right of the Church to interpret the content of the natural law has been vindicated in the Encyclicals, "Chaste Marriage," and "Humani Generis." In his Allocution of March 23, 1952, Pius XII repeated this teaching:

But where can both the educator and the one to be educated find the Christian moral law with ease and certitude? In the law of the Creator [the natural law] engraved in the heart of every man (Romans, 2:14-16), and in revelation, that is, in the truths and precepts that the Divine Master taught. Both of these, the natural law written in the



heart, and the truths and precepts of supernatural revelation, Jesus, our Redeemer, gave to His Church as the moral treasure of humanity in order that she might preach them to all creatures, explain them, and hand them down intact and safeguarded from all contamination and error from one generation to another.

It is for these reasons that the teaching of the Church on birth control must be accepted as official, authentic, and obligatory, and this is true even if this teaching is considered to contain only a prohibition of the natural law and not also a law promulgated in supernatural revelation.

From the papal documents previously cited, it is clear that the condemnation of the Church falls upon two general ways of depriving the marital act of its inherent power to procreate new life; namely, either by mutilating the physical integrity of the marital act itself, which has for its immediate purpose the transfer of the semen from the body of the husband to the vagina of the wife; or, if this act is properly performed, by interfering with the development of the subsequent role of nature whose part in procreation is this: to provide for the transmission of the semen from the vagina of the wife through the uterus to the Fallopian tubes where, if there is a recently-released mature ovum, conception takes place in the union of the two elements.

The impediment to procreation, then, can take place before the marital act by any of the directly sterilizing processes, either permanent or temporary, of the husband or wife; or during the act, when the semen is not deposited in the vagina; or after the act, as when the semen is expelled by a douche, or killed by a spermicide, or impeded in its subsequent natural journey by a diaphragm or cervical cap which prevents the entrance of the semen into the cervix of the uterus.

More serious than the prevention of conception in individual marital acts is any sterilizing process which has for its direct purpose the permanent incapacity to procreate. In his Allocution to the Obstetrical Nurses, Pius XII said:

It would be more than a want of readiness in the service of life if the attempt made by man were to concern not the individual act, but would affect the entire organism itself with the intention of depriving it, by means of sterilization, of the faculty of procreating new life. Here, too, you have a clearly-established principle of the Church's teaching which governs your behavior both internally and externally. Direct sterilization—that is, the sterilization which aims, either as a means or as an end, to render childbearing impossible—is a grave violation of the moral law, and therefore unlawful.

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to appreciate the teaching of the Church on any one point of morality in married life, such as birth control, unless the individual doctrine is evaluated within the context of the total teaching of the Church on the dignity of married life and on its sacred nature and purposes. Individual norms of conduct can be judged properly only when they are seen as part of a total, integrated system within which they appear as logically derived conclusions from carefully defined premises.

Now marriage is a sacred vocation in which two people are united to cooperate with God in the procreation of new life, and to help each other by mutual love to grow more perfect as human beings and as children of God. Like the priesthood, married life begins, for the baptized, with a sacrament instituted by Christ which gives to the husband and wife a title to the helps of supernatural grace which they will need in order to direct their married love to the purposes of their state of life. Like the priesthood, it is intended to last for life.

Moreover, only a small portion of the human race will remain single from choice or necessity. For the great majority of men and women, it is in the married state and precisely by means of the various attitudes and activities of this state that they must seek their eternal salvation. This means that, for the large majority of mankind, it is the fulfillment of the obligations of married love and the realization of its joys—joys of mind, heart, and body—that are their special means of sanctification. For the ultimate purpose of marriage, as of every other human activity, is to grow in love of God here on earth, so that one may be united with God in love for all eternity.

Married life begins with a contract that is a sacrament. From this contract as its cause, there results a state of life we call marriage. Marriage is, then, the perpetual and exclusive moral bond uniting husband and wife in love, which consists of mutual rights and obligations with regard to all those attitudes and activities by which the essential purposes of marriage can be accomplished. So, if we would know the essential nature of the married state, the very meaning of marriage itself, we must look to the essential purposes to which God and nature direct the mutual attitudes and acts of married love.

I do not think anyone will deny that the procreation and education of children is one of the purposes of marriage. In the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis we read: "And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them saying: increase and multiply and fill the earth."

Moreover, it does not take a very profound study of human beings to realize that man and woman are different in many ways, and that these sexual differences are intended to com-

plement each other. It is not only the different generative systems of man and woman that are two inadequate parts that can achieve their purpose only when united. The whole constitution of man and woman is different and complementary: the anatomical, the physiological, the psychic, the emotional, the cultural, and the religious. Certainly what is male in the husband and what is female in the wife proclaim not only the sexual union of two bodies but also a destination for fatherhood and motherhood, because each can contribute out of his or her basic differences something peculiar and special to the balanced upbringing of their offspring to be children of God and heirs of Heaven. Marriage was instituted not only for the procreation but also for the proper rearing of children.

But this is not all. Another purpose of marriage is that each partner shall give to the other all those special helps which the distinctive qualities of male and female provide, so that the husband and wife may grow gradually more perfect in themselves individually and achieve a more perfect union of love for each other. In the second chapter of the Book of Genesis we read: "It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself." And this passage immediately precedes the formation of Eve's body.

Marriage, then, has for its purpose not only the procreation and education of children, but also the individual and united good of the husband and wife. When we speak of this growth in mutual love, we are dealing with the personalist values in marriage in contradistinction to the more public and social values that concern the good of mankind itself.

Now the realization of the personalist values in marriage has been called by the Church the secondary purpose of the sacra-

ment. We must understand, however, that, as here used, secondary does not mean unimportant or accidental. The mutual help, which each gives to the other in the process of becoming more united in married love, is of tremendous value for its own sake and for the part it plays in the rearing of children. Two people who grow in love keep their affections centered on each other only, and thus their mutual love helps safeguard their chastity and keeps them faithful to each other unto the end. There is always present someone, "a help like unto himself," on whom each can rely in times of individual or family need. Moreover, it is only two people who have genuine love for each other, each of whom has achieved a love that is ready to sacrifice personal pleasure and preference for the good of the other, and to sacrifice mutual pleasure and preference for the good of the child—only they can fulfill in its perfection the sacred trust of rearing children in the knowledge and love of God.

Again, the pursuit of these individual and personalist values of married love is called secondary not in the sense that they are accidental to the married state. Both the secondary and the primary purposes of marriage are essential: there is in marriage a mutual right not only to the procreative act but also to all those attitudes and activities by which its secondary purpose can be achieved. The secondary purpose is so much a part of the essence of marriage that the primary purpose can be realized in the perfect manner intended by God only through the pursuit of the secondary purposes also.

So, the Catholic Church does make much of love in marriage. Yet, in this context, we do not necessarily mean "romantic" love, although that may also be present. We mean, rather, what St. Thomas and the other theologians mean by love when they

explain the virtue of charity. To love another is to want his good, to want good things for him, to want to communicate to the beloved of ourselves and of our natural and acquired goods so that there may be a mutual sharing of benefits. When we say that a husband and wife have the right and the obligation to love each other with conjugal love, we mean that each wants and wills to communicate to the other all those special benefits that are the proper and specific expression of married love. These, of course, are multitudinous. On the highest plane is the will to achieve a shared, holy, and sanctified married life wherein husband and wife help each other to grow in the knowledge and love of God in proportion as they grow in the knowledge and love of each other.

Further still, in the very exercise of the marital act, there is a symbolism that is important for the understanding of the Church's position on birth control. Marital intercourse, of its very nature, has an objective meaning, and those who indulge in it should in the very act express to each other the meaning that God and nature have attached to their union.

The act of intercourse is the external symbol of internal union. Of its very nature it says: I love you; I give myself to you unreservedly, completely; I give you of myself, of my substance, of that which I am as a man and a husband, holding nothing back. And, on the part of the wife: I rejoice in this union of our bodies as we are already united in mind and heart; I yield my womanhood and my wifehood to you completely, unreservedly; I am openly receptive to your substance, to the power of your manhood over me, rejecting no part of you.

Still another symbolism. Since it is the marital act that prepares for the union of the male and female elements necessary

for procreation, in marital intercourse there is a natural sign of the willingness to become a father and mother, of the desire to confer on each other the dignity of fatherhood or motherhood, of the common will to be also united in parenthood.

As its third natural symbolism, the marital act expresses an openness of both body and will to the creative act of God by which a human being comes into existence. It proclaims, of its very nature, a willingness to cooperate with God in this most sacred of human functions: to provide the physical two-in-one substance into which God, by an immediate creative act, will infuse a human soul.

From our knowledge of marriage derived from revelation, there emerges a still higher symbolism of the marital act. We are told in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians that the sacrament of marriage is the symbol of the union of Christ with His Church, a union that is a total gift on the part of Christ of the abundance of His graces which man must not render fruitless by his refusal to cooperate with them.

Viewed within this total context, what justification is there for the position of the Catholic Church on birth control?

It cannot be denied that contraceptive practices are a deliberate frustration of the procreative purpose of marriage and of the generative faculty. This reason for its condemnation is not a mere "biologism." The force of the reasoning lies in this: we are dealing here with human sexuality, with the reasoned and deliberate acts of human beings who are bound by the obligations of the state of life they have freely chosen. Human beings may not choose to start a process which reason and revelation tell them has procreation as an essential purpose while they destroy this essential purpose, by human artifice, in the very

marital act they exercise. Moreover, this institution of marriage is, before all, for the good of the human race. Certainly it is an inversion of the order of marital values if it is the good of the individuals, even though not necessarily their selfish good, that alone determines the morality of their mutual relations.

This direct violation of an essential order established by God and nature is reason enough, in itself, to show that contraception offends against nature and the law of God, and it is usually this reason that is emphasized in the papal documents to show the intrinsic malice of contraceptive practices. However, this is not the only reason that can be offered in justification of the Church's interpretation of the natural law on the morality of birth control. We shall see others after we have considered some objections raised against this first position.

Contraception, we are told, far from being a subversion of the natural order, is actually motivated by the highest of unselfish reasons. Contraception is practiced because of love of the wife and in order to save her from an unwelcome or dangerous pregnancy, or for love of a child who might be born physically or psychically deficient. In fact, it is even for the good of the human race and for love of the common good that two reasonable people take the responsible decision to continue to have marital intercourse, even with contraceptives, because they look upon the marital act as the expression of their sacramental love.

Now, we do not deny that the reasons alleged may be sufficient to justify a responsible decision to have no more children. But the morality of the means chosen to accomplish that purpose must also be considered. Moreover, we too look upon marital intercourse as an expression of sacramental love. But, *what kind of intercourse* is the natural expression of sacra-



mental love? The point is this. It is not left to the arbitrary decision of human beings to choose any means of their own preference as the expression of their love. Surely, two people who are genuinely in love but unmarried are not morally free to choose the act of intercourse as the external expression of their inner feelings. Even married people, who have the right to express their love externally, do not have the moral right to select arbitrarily any kind of mutual act as its expression. Anyone would admit that there are mutual acts that married people are physically capable of performing that would be a travesty of any true expression of mutual love. *That act only* is the legitimate expression of conjugal love which is objectively in accord with God's plan for the use of the generative faculty in marriage. Only nature's own act expresses conjugal love—and this will be emphasized in much that follows.

Again, consider the contention that the two essential purposes of marriage are equal and separable. First, can these two purposes really be equal? The procreation and education of children is a matter of public concern and of the common good which is a value superior to the good of the individual. Further, if we consider the totality and complexity of the generative system—a complexity that is neural, glandular, vascular, muscular, with internal and external organs—what a small part of that whole system actually participates in the mere bodily union of intercourse, and what a small part of that whole system is the site of pleasure and bodily satisfaction. Surely, if God had envisioned the personal satisfaction of the individual spouses as the equal or primary purpose of the generative function in marriage, He would have fashioned man and woman in a different mold.

As justification for the deliberate separation, through contraception, of the primary and secondary purposes of marriage, we are told that nature itself separates the two functions and the two purposes since some people are by nature sterile. The fact is true, of course, but the underlying assumption of such a contention is this: Whatever one finds in nature may be legitimately reproduced by human artifice. Sterility that is natural is a misfortune. The lack of offspring, then, cannot be attributed to the moral fault of the naturally sterile. Moreover, sterility that is natural and irremediable can be accepted in submission to the will of God and used as a means of marital holiness. But the mere fact that some people are naturally sterile does not warrant the conclusion that anyone may therefore make himself sterile by means directly intended or objectively ordered only to prevent conception. Man does not have absolute ownership of his own life, nor of his body, nor of the organs and functions of his body. In their regard he is only a steward and he is bound by the laws of reasonable administration to use them only for the purposes ordained by God to whom he must render an account of his stewardship.

Moreover, if it is lawful to separate completely the procreative purpose of the generative function and of the marital act from their personalist and individual values, then I know of no principle by which any mutual act of two people, married or unmarried, of opposite sexes or of the same sex, can be condemned as immoral, if they simply state that this is the way they choose to express their mutual love.

The violation of the primary purpose of marriage as the first reason for the justification of the Church's position on birth control has been treated at some length because it is this

reason that is generally attacked by the sponsors of the birth control movement. Yet, the basic truth is this: it is immoral to contravene any essential purpose of marriage, whether it be primary or secondary. Just as one may not seek the realization of the secondary purpose of marriage by an act that is a direct nullification of its primary purpose, so one may not attempt to accomplish its primary purpose by an act that is a direct contradiction of its secondary purpose. The frustration of any essential purpose of marriage is a violation of an essential order established by God. In fact, it is because artificial insemination violates the secondary but essential purpose of marriage that the Church has declared it objectionable on moral grounds even though the primary purpose of marriage can be realized by this means.

Therefore, although it is true that the secondary purpose of marriage is subordinate to its primary purpose, this subordination is not a necessary element for the justification of the Church's position against artificial birth control. Procreation is certainly an essential purpose of marriage, and this essential purpose is certainly and directly violated by contraceptive practices.

We maintain that contraception is also a direct violation of the secondary purpose of marriage, and that it is a distortion of all the objective symbolism and natural meaning of the marital act.

The secondary purpose of marriage is the individual good of the husband and wife through mutual help and growth in genuine love and the marital act is a language that, of its very nature, expresses that love. The marital act is not intended to be a mere juxtaposition of two egocentricities, each seeking its own

satisfaction. It is intended to be the physical expression of that perfect two-in-oneness that pertains to the secondary purpose of marriage. Now, when contraceptives are used, they also prevent the total surrender of the wife to the influence and power of the husband over her body, and the total giving of the husband of all that he is as a male and a husband. Something is held back—and in that holding back, the complete two-in-oneness of the husband and wife is prevented as surely as conception is prevented. This is a violation of the secondary purpose of marriage.

In this violation of the secondary purpose of marriage, one of the three natural symbolisms of the marital act is destroyed. Involved in this is not merely the saying of an untruth; husband and wife act out the substance of a living lie because they prevent their complete two-in-oneness in the very act which should naturally express it.

Again, the marital act is not intended to be a closed union of dual egocentricity, each seeking to satisfy the other to the exclusion of every other consideration. Of its very nature it says an open duality, not a duality closed on itself. It says a mutual act that is open to the entrance of another, to its own fruitfulness, so that husband and wife may become a family. Yet, when contraceptives are used, they make the very act of union a rejection of its open duality, a denial of the willingness to become parents and to confer the dignity of parenthood on the other. There is the use of a sign that says parenthood while deliberately destroying its meaning in its very use. This is more than a spoken lie; it is a lie that is lived in action. It is a distortion of the second natural symbolism of the marital act.

Finally, the marital act says a submission to God's creative

will, an openness to His intervention. It is a sign of the loving Providence of God over each individual in whom He infuses an immortal soul at the moment of conception. But contraception rejects this submission and openness to God's creative intervention in the very act that speaks it. Again, the third natural symbolism of the marital act is destroyed, and a lie is not merely spoken but lived.

We may conclude this section with a final quotation:

It is a characteristic common to all perversions that in them reproduction is an aim put aside. This is actually the criterion by which we judge whether a sexual act is perverse—if it departs from reproduction in its aims and pursues the attainment of gratification independently. You will understand, therefore, that the gulf and turning point in the development of sexual life lies at the point of its subordination to the purposes of reproduction. Everything that occurs before this conversion takes place, and everything that refuses to conform to it and serves the purpose of gratification alone, is called by the unhonored name of "perversion" and as such is despised.

The above words are not taken from the pronouncement of a Pope, but from Sigmund Freud (*A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Tr. Joan Riviere, Garden City, N.Y., 1935, p. 277). Freud was certainly no champion of the Christian moral code, but in this instance, he drew from his psychiatric experience a principle completely in keeping with the Catholic position. It would also be possible to cite other psychiatrists who offer evidence to show that contraception is incompatible with the totally oblation, exclusive, and sincere qualities of conjugal love, and that it leads to psychic difficulties in many instances.

No use has been made of the thirty-eighth chapter of the Book of Genesis to show that the prohibition of contraception is also contained in supernatural revelation. In that chapter there

is the story of Onan who has given his name to the whole system of contraceptive practices. After recording his sin of contraception by withdrawal, the passage continues: ". . . therefore the Lord slew him because he did a detestable thing."

My personal opinion is that the detestable thing for which he was slain by God was mainly, if not exclusively, the sin of contraception. There are, however, scriptural exegetes who hold that the punishment was inflicted on Onan because of his violation of the Levirate law. But, since death was not a punishment established for the violation of the Levirate law, the fact that Onan was so punished should indicate that it was rather because of his contraceptive act that "the Lord slew him."

There is really no need in an essay on birth control to explain all the moral norms that determine when the practice of periodic continence by the rhythm method is justified in particular instances. However, a brief presentation may be given to show that the reasons for the condemnation leveled against contraception are not applicable to the rhythm method.

In the first place, one should not have to belabor the point that, in judging the morality of an act, the *means* used even in the pursuit of a good purpose are a prime moral consideration. If I desire to present a gift to a friend, the object of that intention is good and its motive, we may suppose, is one of charity. However, if I steal the money as a means of presenting the gift, the theft remains a sin of injustice even though it is a means of accomplishing a purpose that is good in itself. A good end does not justify the use of an immoral means.

The Church has often stated that when there exist proportionate reasons of medical, eugenic, economic, or social nature for limiting the size of the family or spacing the arrival of

children, the use of periodic continence by the rhythm method is morally unobjectionable. Moreover, when Pius XII had words of praise for large families, he did not praise precisely the mere production of a large number of children—a feat that, at least on the part of the husband, requires no specialized skill. The Pope's words of praise were directed to those who courageously rear a large family (*allevano* is the Italian word used, not *procreano*). For it is the sacrifice of the parents in the rearing and education of their children which merits our admiration. It is not only the procreation but also the education of children that constitutes the primary purpose of marriage. The Catholic Church, too, believes in responsible parenthood.

The first thing to notice about the rhythm method is that it requires the practice of continence, even though only temporarily and periodically. It is therefore an act of control, of moderation, of regulation of the sexual appetite, and, with the proper motive, it is an exercise of the virtue of chastity not only during the fertile periods when spouses abstain from sexual intercourse, but also during the sterile periods when they indulge in it. Moreover, even during the periods of abstinence, husband and wife express their love for each other, because marital intercourse is not the only word of love at their disposal. Sometimes abstinence, and the sacrifice it involves, is an even greater expression of love than sexual completion. This abstinence can also be an act of love of God, because it is precisely out of reverence for the law of God and from a desire to keep their married love sinless that the husband and wife abstain when sexual intercourse with contraceptives would be so much easier a solution. This abstinence during the fertile periods is in violation of no law of God because, in our supposition that the mo-

tives are not egoistic but morally good, the affirmative law that obliges married people to make a contribution to the conservation of the human race does not bind them here and now.

As to the other element in the rhythm method, namely, the exercise of complete marital rights during the sterile periods, the act of coition retains all the objective significance that is in it by nature. The act itself is normal and natural, retaining its physical integrity. The course of its natural development is not impeded by human artifice, but by the condition of nature itself. It is a total giving with nothing held back; a total reception with no deliberate barrier to complete two-in-oneness. Moreover, their minds and wills are still open to parenthood and to the creative intervention of God, because they have either fulfilled their obligation of procreation, or will fulfill it at some other time, or are excused from further obligation because of weighty reasons of medical, eugenic, economic, or moral character. Moreover, it is evidently not during the sterile periods that married people can fulfill the affirmative precept: "Increase and multiply."

The morality of the means used in the exercise of responsible parenthood is of prime importance. The Church sees in the method of periodic continence a legitimate means; but she has always, and with good reason, condemned contraceptive practices as intrinsically evil and a violation of the law of God.



# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CENSORSHIP

Harold C. Gardiner, S.J.

A VERY common misconception of Catholicism stems from the problem of censorship. In a free society such as our own with its existing intellectual climate, many voices are raised against certain movements and activities which apparently threaten the freedom and right of the individual to read, see, say, and indeed think what he chooses. The perennial struggle between liberty and authority, freedom and constraint, individual and society is heightened in our day when the momentum of big business and big government—and, some would say, big Church—threaten to deny and even crush individual dignity and expression.

Yet censorship is not without its defenders. For example, the United States Supreme Court recently handed down a decision

which seemed to fly in the face of our traditional distaste for anything like prior censorship. In this instance the Court decided that a board of film reviewers in the city of Chicago had a constitutional right to demand a previewing of a film before it was released for public presentation. These and other instances of attempts to control public expression keep the problem of censorship constantly before the reading and viewing public. In the minds of many, moreover, the Catholic Church has been identified with the cause of censorship and all its attendant ills, whether real or imaginary.

My purpose is not to solve once and for all every problem of censorship. No such solution is possible, for the relative claims of freedom on the one hand and the necessity for some restraint on the other must constantly be reconsidered and readjusted in any dynamic and democratic society. The main purpose, therefore, is to put the controversy over censorship into a framework and to try to give guidance for intelligent discussion. There are those, as we have seen, who are violently and vigorously opposed to any form of censorship; there are, on the other hand, those who are inclined to demand and expect too rigorous a control. Between the two extremes there are many who are concerned with the problem of the type of literature and entertainment widely available in the country and who, in trying to face this problem, are looking for some sort of working agreement that will provide restraint and protection while honoring the freedom of expression that is one of the bulwarks of a democratic society. It is among those who occupy this middle ground, and not among the advocates of too strict control, that those who are guided by the provisions of the Canon Law of the Catholic Church should be placed. That is why, if we are

to discuss censorship temperately and constructively, it is a very salutary discipline to consider first a stand on censorship as it emerges from the Church's law and the commentaries upon it.

First let us define some terms. I would not consider that I were being censored if at the end of this essay many of my readers expressed disagreement. I would, however, consider that I were being censored if some editor or publisher had effectively prevented me from expressing in this essay my viewpoint. In the first instance, I would have been subjected to criticism; in the second, I would have been the subject of effective silencing. The point here, and it is a point that is often overlooked, is that one cannot correctly refer to criticism, even organized criticism, as censorship. Censorship is a control exercised by an authority which has power to impose the control—whether that power be moral or physical. If four or five drama critics in the New York press agree in severe adverse criticism of a play, they may indeed bring it about that the play closes. But no one would accuse them of having censored the play into failure. Readers of the critics' excoriations were still free, if they were so inclined, to go and see the play. But if a cordon of police had surrounded the theatre and prevented entrance, there would have been not merely criticism but effective censorship. This remark, which may seem quite obvious, will have a bearing later when we discuss the operations of the National Legion of Decency and the National Office for Decent Literature.

A second distinction: censorship in this essay is restricted to cultural control. We are not interested in political or military restriction of information. Specifically we are concerned with the field of literature—magazines, pocket books, comic books, and the motion pictures. It is these media of cultural expression

which are most frequently under fire when the problem of censorship raises its head.

Let us then pose the question suggested by the title of this chapter in this fashion: is the Catholic Church in favor of strict censorship? To this the answer is yes, provided we follow it immediately with a most important restrictive phrase. The Catholic Church is in favor of strict censorship *for its own members*. A second question is: is the Catholic Church in favor of censorship as exercised by a given civil authority? This second question will occupy the second part of this chapter.

To return then to the first question: the fact that the Church is in favor of censorship and actually exercises censorship for its own members is clear from the provisions of Canon Law. This censorship for its own members is operative in two specific ways. First of all, beginning with Canon 1399, the Church imposes legislation designed to control for a specific purpose the reading of its members. This section of Canon Law is made up of items which refer to various categories of books, types of books, and not specific titles. There are in all some thirteen categories but for our purpose it will suffice to mention two. First, books on religion—that is, books that deal professedly with religious subject matter, if written by non-Catholics, may not be read by Catholic readers unless it is clear that there is nothing in the books *contrary* to Catholic faith and morals. This requires clarification. The provisions of Canon Law are to be strictly interpreted; hence, when Canon Law says books that treat of religion, it means books whose explicit theme is some aspect of religion—a book, for example, that studied the Incarnation or the sacrament of marriage. It does not mean a book that might have some religious aspects or episodes as, for

example, a novel in which one of the characters professes a belief in reincarnation. Books dealing specifically with religious themes and written by non-Catholics are typified by some of the work of C. S. Lewis, such as *The Screwtape Letters*. May a Catholic therefore read Mr. C. S. Lewis under the provisions of Canon Law? The answer is yes because Mr. Lewis' work does not fall under the second part of the restriction—there is nothing in his work which is *contrary* to the teachings of the Church. Some of his work may indeed be inadequate in its treatment of Catholic themes but inadequacy is not the same thing as hostility.

The second type of book covered in the provisions of Canon Law which has some relevance here is the category that forbids to Catholic readers books that are *ex professo* obscene—books that have as their explicit purpose to teach, to defend, to glamorize themes that appeal to the venereal passions, to “prurient interest” (as the Supreme Court of the United States phrased it in the famous Roth decision of 1956).

Other types of books covered in the general provisions of Canon Law need not detain us here. They are, for example, books that *defend* heresy, that deride religion or the moral law, and so on.

It is obvious that it is sometimes a delicate task to determine if a particular book clearly falls within a certain category. Is a certain book, for example, merely a description of the tenets of Methodism, or is it a positive apologetic *for* those tenets? Is this quasi-scientific study of divorce merely a reporting of facts and figures, or is it an attempted justification of divorce? The individual reader, if he is a Catholic and knows of the existence of the forbidden categories, obviously has the obligation to solve

such doubts when and if they arise, and this he will do by consulting some authority—his confessor, a professor in the field, a critic or reviewer who has some recognized standing. But the general rule may be laid down—and it is a rule that is stated in Canon Law itself—that since restrictive elements in law are always to be interpreted to their minimum extent, the presumption is always in favor of freedom. One is presumed free to read such books unless they *clearly* fall within the restrictions of the Canons. This is by no means to say that the individual may take the law into his own hands but merely that the spirit of the law, as applied by one who has power to interpret it, is always to be a spirit that respects the prior rights of freedom, as they apply in this particular case.

The second means by which the Church actually exercises censorship in the matter of reading is the famous—and largely misunderstood—Index of Forbidden Books.

The Index is a listing, by author and title, of some four thousand books. These books are, of course, a specification of the general categories we have been mentioning. They are placed on the Index because they are contrary to faith and/or morals. It may be a matter of doubt whether or not a book falls under one or other of the general categories; it cannot be a matter of debate whether or not a book is on the Index—that is a matter of fact. If a book is on the Index, then it may not be read (always supposing the necessary condition to be mentioned later); if it is not on the Index, then it may or may not be read depending on the operation of the natural moral law.

There are many misconceptions about the Index. The most prevalent is that the very existence of the Index constitutes a tremendous limitation of the Catholic's intellectual freedom.

There are literally thousands and thousands of books, so this misconception runs, that Catholics simply cannot read, a whole world of literature, philosophy, and science that is fated to remain closed to the intellectual Catholic.

The statistics in such an argument are quite wrong. It is true that the Index lists some four thousand books. But if we consider the millions of books that have been printed since the invention of movable type in the fifteenth century, those four thousand are but a drop in the bucket. Moreover, of the four thousand, about three thousand are books that no one, no matter how inquisitive and intelligent, ever hears of today. In fact, most of them are unavailable and have been for generations antiquarian items. Even if one could find them, there would be a very minimal urge to read them; so many of them would be found to deal with controversies long dead, with historical distortions long since put right, with social problems that have yielded to social progress. Consider, for instance, a book that might well have been a social menace because it upheld the morality of duelling—how great a social threat would such a book be today?

Of the thousand or so remaining books, 60 to 70 percent are of interest only to specialists, dealing with theological or philosophical questions that would interest only someone delving into side paths of trends and movements. There would remain but two or three hundred books that would offer any interest to the average, general reader, and it is not surprising that most of these books would be found in the field of literature. Even here the extent of the restriction is minimal. The French authors have the dubious distinction of leading the list—Zola, Balzac, Gide, to name a few, are represented by some or all of their

works. But there is only *one* novel by an English author on the Index, and to date not a single American novelist has been placed on the Index. This does not imply that every American novel is as pure as the new-fallen snow; possibly the natural law could enter into play to forbid our reading some American novels, but they are not on the Index.

Finally, even those books actually on the Index which one might want to read, or feel he should read to be a well informed person, are not forbidden *absolutely*. The *possibility* of their being read is written into the law itself, for the prohibition does not read "these books cannot be read by any Catholic whatsoever," but "these books may not be read *without permission*." Can one obtain permission? Yes; under proper circumstances and for valid reasons. Legitimate study is one reason that will generally be considered valid by the proper authorities; sound self-improvement, even apart from a formal course of study, may very well be thought a valid reason. Mere curiosity will not be thought a valid reason; far from being a valid reason, it is a quality that cries out for guidance and protection. Those who are intellectually and culturally prepared to cope with books that are on the Index for the sole reasons that they are inimical to faith and morals are precisely the ones who have the best chance of getting permission to read them. Those who are not prepared, who are vulnerable to having their faith weakened or their moral standards lowered, are precisely the ones who benefit by the vigilance of the law.

The basic reason for all the Church's disciplinary code (of which the legislation on reading is a part) is the advancement of the common good. The protection of faith and morals is a higher good than the reading of this or that book, and the gen-



eral health of the Church is a greater good than intellectual advancement of any one member. Let it be noted however that such individual advancement is protected by the proviso that the necessary permission to read may be obtained.

This brings us to a consideration of the extent of the Code's restrictions, and will touch on a problem that often faces the legitimately inquiring reader: how many Catholics, or, better, what type of Catholic is bound by the restrictions of the Code? When the Code says that such and such a book may not be read without permission, does it mean that every single Catholic is bound to get permission before reading? In general terms, the answer is yes, and that because of the very nature of positive law, whether ecclesiastical or civil. Provisions of positive law, since they are laid down for the *common good*, oblige all, even those who, objectively speaking, would not seem subject to the restrictions. For instance, traffic laws state, let us say, that no one in this locality may drive on the highways over 70 miles an hour. This law is obviously intended to protect life and limb. But here is a driver who knows, sincerely and honestly, that *he* can drive at 90 miles an hour with absolutely no danger to himself or others. Is he still bound by the law? Yes, unless he can go to the very authorities who have passed the law, explain his case, and get an exemption. The reason for this quality of the positive law is obvious: if everyone could decide that a particular law did not apply to himself, the very purpose of law, the regulation of society for the common good, would be rendered ineffective.

It is also true that any sane positive law allows for exceptions. The sane and skillful driver would certainly not be arrested and punished—or ought not to be—if he were driving at 90 miles an

hour to get his wife to the delivery room in time. And this is true of Canon Law as well. According to canonists, in order to be excused from the law, one must be in a situation where a moderately serious inconvenience, extrinsic to the purpose of the law, would result from observance of the law. Now the restrictions on reading imposed by the Code are, at least to some extent, inconveniences, so that the mere fact of the inconvenience does not constitute a valid excuse. But the law was never set up to bring about, for instance, failure in academic courses or examinations. Hence, if there is a real likelihood that such failure would result from not having read a certain book, the student, according to sound interpretation of the Code, would be excused—under the proviso, be it added, that he has fulfilled the law by applying for the permission. With these exceptions, which the law itself envisions, the general rule stands: the prohibitions of the laws controlling reading apply to all Catholics because the law is destined to safeguard the common good.

With this consideration of the position of the Church on censorship *for its own members*, we have put the rest of our essay in focus. The Church is not wedded to a blind censorship. Granted that the Catholic Church has the right and the duty to provide safeguards for the faith and morals of its members, the inner logic of her divine commission leads inescapably to some form of control of reading. If the Church were to permit the generality of its members to read anything at all that appeals to curiosity and only afterwards concern itself about weakened or lost faith, or debilitated moral standards, she would be prostituting her own divinely imposed mission of bringing men to religious truth and keeping them on that royal road. The restrictions are not posed merely for the sake of cur-

tailoring freedom; they are imposed for the sake of a higher freedom, the freedom of the generality of Catholics to preserve their faith and maintain moral standards without being subjected to the dangers that lurk in some books. That freedom for the general body of Catholics is preserved while a more limited freedom of a relatively smaller body of Catholics is also safeguarded—the freedom of scholars, students, and others legitimately concerned to read the books that are generally restricted, if and when the proper permission is granted.

The second question we posed at the beginning of this essay was: is the Catholic Church in favor of censorship in a given society, to be exercised by civil authority? Specifically, is the Church in this country in favor of censorship laws laid down and enforced by local, state, or federal government? To this question, posed in this general form, the answer is yes—but with many qualifications.

The general answer is yes because of the very nature of civil law. In Catholic philosophy any society has not only the right, but the duty, to protect itself, and that often reduces itself to the right and duty of enacting restrictive laws. It is a fallacy common in America to believe that the ultimate goal of law is freedom. That is an oversimplification. The ultimate goal of law is *justice*, and justice is attained at times by an extension of freedom, at times by the imposition of restraint, generally by a delicate mixture of both. In our present situation in the United States, the law will achieve its end—justice—by a widening of civic freedom accorded to our Negro citizens; it will also attain its end, many think, by more restraint in the matter of motion pictures available for viewing by adolescents.

The law, whether ecclesiastical or civil, always works under

a *presumption* of freedom—a man is presumed free to act as he chooses, *unless* that action must be restrained for a greater good. Hence it is that the Catholic Church, though in favor of the right and duty of civil society to restrain its members, is always committed to the *minimum of restraint necessary to the achievement of that common good*. It follows naturally that the Church in the United States has always been inclined to look with a dim eye on anything like federal censorship in these cultural matters of which we are speaking. A fuller treatment of this theme will be found in my volume on *Catholic View on Censorship* (Hanover House, 1958), where it is clear that one of the main reasons for the establishment of the National Legion of Decency in 1933 was precisely the alarm felt by the Catholic bishops that a federal bureau of censorship might be created.

This practical stand rises naturally from the great principle of subsidiarity that has been stressed in the social encyclicals of the Popes. That social doctrine holds that what can be accomplished by subordinate social groups is best left to their solution, rather than being taken over by a superior group. If a family can solve its social problems, the town or city should not step in; if a state can answer its own problems, the federal government should stand aloof. This is not to deny the competence of the higher groups, but simply to say that there is a hierarchy of responsibility.

Hence the Church in this country, though generally in favor of restrictive activity by civil authority when necessary for a higher good, believes that such restriction is best exercised by local communities. It is best exercised, as a matter of fact, by families, but our whole discussion here is devoted to what *civil society* can do. Further, the Church is committed, not to *any*

*kind* of action by community or state, but to action according to law, that is, in accordance with the civil law in a given community. That is why one finds, from time to time, a Church group or a particular churchman coming out in public statements in favor of censorship provisions in a local or state ordinance. It is not generally true that such statements are to be construed as endorsing such ordinances in detail. The Catholic position is that censorship according to law is a necessary tool in the right governing of any society. It may be that this particular censorship law in this given society is badly phrased or is contrary to the spirit if not the letter of the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression. If so, let the law be changed, but let it not be held either that no law can ever envision censorship or that censorship can properly be invoked independently of law.

There is simply not space enough in these pages to embark on a discussion of all the statutes that exist in the United States that impose some kind of control in this field. Every state in the Union has laws, for example, that restrict the publication and circulation of "obscene material." (New Mexico is something of an exception, and I am not sure about the existence of such statutes in our new states of Alaska and Hawaii.) There are, in addition, laws invoked by the Post Office Department and by the U.S. Customs Office regarding the importation and interstate circulation of such material. As is certainly well known, many of these statutes are constantly being challenged as unconstitutional restrictions, and the Church in the United States is certainly not committed to upholding the constitutional validity of all these restrictions. The principle is clear: wherever and whenever a law exists or is passed that is constitutionally

valid, then and there the attitude of the Church is that such a law is in general a proper restriction of freedom aimed at promoting the common civic good.

Something should be said about two agencies, if we may call them that, of the Catholic Church in this country. They are the National Legion of Decency, which lists the motion pictures with regard to their moral soundness or unsoundness, and the National Office for Decent Literature, which issues monthly lists of literature (comic books, paperbacks, magazines) disapproved for reading by youth. The charge is made (somewhat less frequently nowadays than it was some years ago) that each of these organizations engages in censorship in such fashion as to be undemocratic, un-American, unconstitutional. These charges and the responses to them will be found at length in *Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship* (a chapter is devoted to each organization). Here it will perhaps suffice to restate the simple fact of the matter: neither the Legion nor the NODL conceives itself to be, nor in fact is, engaged in censorship. This is so because neither organization has authority from the Roman Catholic hierarchy *to enforce* any control. Each organization *advises*, counsels Catholics that certain motion pictures, certain types of printed literature, should not to be viewed or read. There is no sanction put upon disregard of this caution. One may indeed sin by imprudent viewing or reading, but not because of the mere fact that the counsel has been unheeded.

In short, both the Legion and the NODL fulfill their purposes by being organs to arouse public opinion. That is their stated goal and their constant pursuit, and those who persist, even after many clarifications of the matter, in calling them "censorship" bodies are guilty of ignorance.

It is true that from time to time local groups, working under the inspiration of the NODL or the Legion, have been more zealous than the parent organization. Such action cannot claim to represent the mind of the American Church, for "censorship under law" means also that no private group has the right to take the law into its own hands.

It is to be hoped that this brief exposition will have served to show two things. First, as regards its own members, the Church does exercise censorship, but it is imposed with great consideration for the rights of the reader, and always under the dominant motive of providing for the common good. Those who are not Catholics may still, and understandably enough, think that it is a severe discipline, but I think it may safely be said that no informed Catholic finds it a very galling restriction. Second, the Church is not in the least interested in extending this family discipline, if we may call it such, to those not of the Church. The censorship for society at large which the Church approves is a censorship that will commend itself to any intelligent American—a censorship under all the protections of our Constitution and for the purpose of advancing the common civic good, which is the temporal concern of Catholics and non-Catholics alike.





# MAN AND WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Joseph Donceel, S.J.

It has often been remarked that women seem to play a rather insignificant part in Catholic thought and practice. At the beginning of sacred history her role is not especially praiseworthy, since it is Eve who offers the forbidden fruit to Adam. Also since the Church had its earthly origins in a Near-Eastern culture where women's importance was slight, it may seem as if present-day practice reflects the Church's cultural origins. It would appear at times that Catholic piety not only believes that woman's place is in the home but conceives of her as a sort of domestic drudge who should be content with a family ambience and not reach out too eagerly for education, human development, or achievement in less domestic arts and sciences. She has no official functions in the liturgy of the

Church. There are no deaconesses and women are not ordained ministers of God. It is quite true that Genesis proclaims her as man's *socia*, his spiritual equal, with the same rationality and spirituality, the same immortal destiny as her husband. But in practice, as in ancient Israel, she seems to hold a relatively modest position. Is it really possible that God intended that one half of the human race be simply a sort of necessary adjunct to His Church,—or is woman's position actually an authentic reflection of the Church's thought on the differences between the sexes?

It is always dangerous to discuss the differences between the sexes. Women, in this respect, are wiser than the men. They do not often write on the psychology of men, whereas a number of men boldly hold forth on the psychology of women. Things are even stranger, when he who writes on that topic spends most of his waking hours and all his resting time in a house strictly out of bounds for feminine company—in a cloister. Of all people, it seems, he ought to maintain a prudent silence on the subject of sex differences.

And yet, ideally a referee belongs to neither group between which he arbitrates. Since angels do not write, however, perhaps a word may be said in favor of those who have freely withdrawn from that "battle of the sexes," which is supposed to go on unabated outside the convent walls. For better or for worse, the author is a man, but perhaps far enough removed from the daily fray to keep an impartial outlook.

Psychologists, strange to say, tend to minimize the differences between the sexes. After having for a while insisted strongly on the influence of biological factors on psychic life, they tend today to emphasize the influence of social factors. If the differences between male and female are caused primarily

by biological factors, they are, of course, inborn and radically unchangeable. On the other hand, should they result mainly from social or cultural influences, then they are mostly acquired, and can be modified. Moreover, since the cultural environment is in a state of slow but steady change, sex differences too should be slowly but steadily changing.

Today there is little doubt that a number of differences between the sexes, once considered inborn, are actually the result of social pressures. Some differences between man and woman were greater a century ago than they are at present. We rarely see women fainting easily, yet that seems to have been a rather common sight in Victorian drawing rooms—well brought up females were supposed to faint in certain circumstances, and faint they did.

It remains a fact, however, that there are basic inborn differences between the sexes. These are obvious with regard to the primary and secondary sex differences, which are directly or indirectly connected with the functions of reproduction. Those differences, however, are not merely anatomical or physiological, for they permeate not only the whole body but also the total psychic life—feelings, emotions, perception, imagination, memory, intelligence, and will.

Even if we admit that human *bodies* are sexually differentiated, should we not say that the human *souls* are asexual, exactly the same in woman and in man? This is a philosophical problem, and in dealing with it one must be careful not to fall into the old, still widespread Cartesian dualism. Descartes held that body and soul are two distinct things, whose union constitutes a human being. But a human being is not a union, but a unity; he is not a couple, but an individual. Hylomorphism, the tradi-

tional Catholic way of explaining the union of soul and body, implies that to some extent even the human soul is masculine or feminine.

The human soul is at once the substantial form of the human being and a spirit in matter; as a substantial form it is the guiding idea, the internal law of construction. As spirits in matter the soul of a man and the soul of a woman are perfectly equal. Both have the power of self-consciousness, of perfect self-reflection, of absolute affirmation, of free choice. Hence in their fundamental human dignity, as sovereign spiritual beings, man and woman are equals.

But the soul is also the guiding idea, the internal law of construction, the substantial form of the body. Strictly speaking, the human being is not composed of soul and body but of soul and of an indetermined component, impervious to human intelligence, which, in philosophy, is called prime matter. Once one admits this point of view he must draw the obvious conclusion: as substantial forms, the soul of a man and the soul of a woman are different. The indetermined, merely potential component cannot, of course, by itself alone, be the cause of any positive aspects of the person. Yet anatomical, physiological, and psychological sex differences are obviously positive aspects, and therefore must come from the substantial form, the soul. Without being in itself either masculine or feminine the soul assumes and maintains in existence the very real differences existing between the two sexes. Too easily we imagine the soul as something hidden within the recesses of the body, as if, without the soul, the body could exist at all. In a certain sense, the soul is visible and tangible in the body, for it is visible in one's eyes, smile, and gait; it is heard in one's voice, inflection, and words.

Considered then not as a spirit in matter, but as substantial form, the guiding idea of the human body, the human soul is either masculine or feminine, and, with the physiologist, the philosopher insists that the differences between the sexes are considerable and, to a great extent, inborn.

What are these differences? Before discussing them, we must note several points. These differences apply to the *average* man and woman, and so they allow many individual exceptions. There is a great amount of overlapping. One can find single instances where the differences will almost be reversed, where a man will show some characteristic feminine features and where a woman will to a great extent fit the description of the average male. These cases are rather exceptional; they prove only that the man in question is not a very masculine man, that the woman is not a very feminine woman; the exception confirms the rule.

It may be useful to reflect on a few ideas expressed by the German philosopher-psychologist Philip Lersch, in his book *Vom Wesen der Geschlechter* (On the Nature of the Sexes).<sup>1</sup> His point of view is not the most popular one today in America. Experimental or scientific psychology, especially in America, tends to underemphasize the differences between the sexes, not only because of the current emphasis on cultural influences, but also because the differences that can be measured scientifically, by tests or other techniques, are indeed generally insignificant. This may mean that there are no significant differences between the sexes. It may also mean that there are no significant *measurable* differences between them. Many experimentalists hold the former opinion, I prefer the latter. Thus, as an example:

1. München, Reinhardt, 1950.

intelligence tests have discovered no reliable differences between the IQ of boys and of girls. Women are as intelligent as men, or, if one prefers, men are as intelligent as women. Yet, I am convinced that they are *differently* intelligent, that they differ in the way in which they use their intellectual abilities. But I have no statistical data to confirm this conviction, and I wonder whether the differences I have in mind can be studied experimentally. There are great differences between Bach and Beethoven, between Cezanne and van Gogh, but statistical data are neither required nor available to prove these differences. This point of view may explain why there are no statistics, figures, curves, or coefficients of correlation or of reliability in Dr. Lersch's book.

Lersch starts with the basic differences deriving from the role of each sex in the life of reproduction. In that domain woman is more passive and receptive, man is more active and aggressive. She shelters and feeds life, he protects and defends it. She stays at home, he roams about. She is the guardian of life, hates war, is drawn to social and charitable activities. He enjoys an occasional fight, and, although war has become distasteful even to him, there remains the struggle for life, for survival, for success and prosperity. Man strives to dominate and control his environment and has devised tools, constructed machines, and invented techniques to achieve this. The differences between the two sexes derive ultimately, according to Lersch, from their main biological function; to conceive, shelter, guard, and nurse life, in the case of woman; to dominate the environment in the case of man.

Because of these different functions, each sex emphasizes different psychic functions. Man's functions demand explicit

volition, are turned against obstacles, and are served by conceptual, abstract thinking. Woman's functions demand feeling and emotion, are fed by images and symbols, and lead to a more concrete, intuitive way of thinking. This leads also to a difference in the horizon of each sex. Woman's world is more restricted in space and time. She lives more in the present, in a familiar world, which she loves and knows how to arrange tastefully. Man lives more in the future, in a faraway world, which he tries to transform. She is more interested in people, he in objects, organizations, fields such as politics, sports, business, science. Generally woman understands people better than man does, and has more empathy, even though he may be capable of writing about others better than she. He is more drawn to abstraction, to analysis and generalization, hence is more adept in the positive sciences and in philosophy. She is more attracted by the concrete, the individual; her approach is more synthetic, she feels more at home in art and in religion.

A noted Dutch theologian, P. Schoonenberg, does not hesitate to extend this differentiation even into the realms of metaphysics and theology.<sup>2</sup> He sees in the opposition-in-unity existing between the two sexes a symbol and embodiment of two transcendental attributes, truth and goodness. Every being, he notes, posits itself as its own word and image, and, as such, reality itself is both knowledge and truth. But the original and the image come back to each other, embrace each other, and, as such, reality is also goodness and love. Knowledge and truth are embodied more in man, goodness and love more in woman. More, not exclusively, of course. A woman without any knowledge

2. P. Schoonenberg, S.J., *Het geloof van ons Doopsel*, Hertogenbosch, 1955, Vol. 1, pp. 205-206.

and truth, a man without any goodness and love would no longer be human persons. It is a question of accent, of emphasis. Man emphasizes knowledge and truth, even in his love and goodness, which he will try to express in image and word. Woman emphasizes goodness and love, even in her truth and knowledge, which makes her knowledge unifying, comprehensive, synthetic. Although Schoonenberg only hints at this, we might perhaps add that man's nature reminds one more of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Eternal Word, whereas woman's nature is more reminiscent of the Third Person, of the Holy Spirit, the unifying love of Father and Son.

We might also consider the views of Alfred Adler, the first follower of Freud. Having faithfully adhered to Freud during the first difficult years of psychoanalysis, Adler later broke away and set up his own system, which is known as Individual Psychology. Rejecting Freud's great insistence on the sex drive, Adler pointed out another, even more important drive in the human person, the drive for power, for superiority. Any frustration of that drive produces a feeling of inferiority; a long-continued or profound frustration may cause an inferiority complex.

Adler studied the sources of such inferiority feelings and complexes, and among them he placed the fact of being a woman. Every woman, according to Adler, harbors in her mind, consciously or unconsciously, a "masculine protest," a desire for more power, for the superiority which is supposed to accompany masculinity. Applied to certain times and cultures, that position is quite plausible. In the books of Pearl Buck, we can see that the Chinese women portrayed in her pages must have felt inferior for no other reason than that they happened



to be women. The same thing may have been true in other countries and even in this country in the past.

But great changes have occurred in this respect, and nowhere more drastically than in the United States. Yet, even now and even in this country, there remains in many women a feeling of inferiority. Anonymous answers to a recent questionnaire showed that a majority of girls in the United States felt that boys on the whole have an easier time in life than girls. Quite a number of the girls admitted that at some time in their life they had wished to belong to the masculine sex. The number of boys who confessed that they had wished to be girls was considerably smaller.

Does this mean that the emancipation of women has not proceeded far enough yet? Possibly. More likely that is not the ultimate reason. If we put ourselves on the natural, instinctive level, if we consider these values the highest in life which we instinctively, naturally, and, *wrongly* tend to rank highest, then men have a decided advantage. Women, as women, are handicapped. Ours is and remains a man's world.

Consider first the factor of physical strength. Not even the most fanatical advocate of equality for the sexes will deny that the average man's bodily strength is superior to that of the average woman. Physical strength may seem to be of little importance in a civilized world, but instinctively we continue to value it highly. Among animals physical strength is one of the most important conditions for survival. And men are animals, rational animals, but still animals. This is especially true during the childhood years. Children have a great respect for bodily strength. Where is the little girl who has not heard the contemptuous, "You are only a girl" from the mouth of some small

boy? Such childhood impressions sink deep in one's mind and influence one, consciously or unconsciously. A child's emotions and feelings are not based on rational judgment, and physical inferiority may be a powerful drawback.

When we consider other things which the human mind instinctively values most highly, men seem to have a real advantage over women. We tend naturally to put a high value on money, power, fame. Precisely because the life of the average woman centers around the function of maternity, it is more difficult for her to achieve these goods independently. There are, of course, women who surpass most men in all these pursuits, but they are the exception, not the rule. Women are handicapped in pursuit of these values not because of any inferiority in intelligence or abilities, but because their main task in life is motherhood. Being a mother tends to be an all-consuming vocation, precisely during a person's most productive and creative years. The average mother has little time and energy left for other pursuits. Even those women who do not achieve motherhood are somehow hampered by the fact that the majority of their sex are heading in that direction, and by the resulting atmosphere of diffidence around them. Their own lack of self-confidence makes outstanding achievement in art, science, business, industry, politics, more difficult for them than for the average man.

Even in the field of religion and within the Church a woman may sometimes wonder whether she does not come out second best. Revelation presents God to us as a Father, not as a mother. The second person of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Eternal Word of God, has become a man, not a woman.

The patriarchal character of the Church, of the mystical body of Christ seems to point in the same direction. There is no institution in Western civilization where,—on superficial examination—there is less equality of the sexes than in the Catholic Church. It is true that the Church originated in a place and time in which women were totally unemancipated. But the Founder of the Church, although He came on earth at a determined time and place, is above time and space, and foresaw future developments. Yet He decided that the government of His Church should be forever in the hands of men. Only men can become priests, bishops, or Popes. This, as theologians say, is “*jure divino*,” ordained by God Himself, hence unchangeable.<sup>3</sup>

We may recall the famous texts of St. Paul about women. They do not appeal to feminists. There seems to be no doubt that some of the Apostle's statements are conditioned by the times in which they were written. St. Paul wanted slaves to be entirely obedient to their masters. This has not prevented the Church from favoring the abolition of slavery, making St. Paul's advice to slaves obsolete. He also wanted wives to be totally submissive to their husbands. Although the Church continues to maintain that the husband is the head of the family, Catholic teaching today emphasizes partnership and mutual love more than submission. When Catholic women, in this country, veil their heads on entering a Church, they carry on a beautiful tradition, going back twenty centuries to St. Paul's advice to the women of Corinth. But when their sisters in Western

3. See K. Rahner, S.J., *Sendung und Gnade*, Innsbruck, Tyrolia, p. 289. An English translation of this book will be published by Sheed & Ward in 1962.

Europe, with the tacit approval of their priests and bishops, enter their churches with heads uncovered, they do not really disobey the apostle.

But that is only an unimportant detail. The fact remains that even within the field of religion and in the Catholic Church women seem to be less privileged than men. However this is not entirely true. If we consider the highest values, not those which we instinctively and wrongly *consider* the highest, but those which really are the highest, women have a privileged position before God.

The highest values are those which unite us to God, which make us Godlike, Christlike.

What qualities make a human being most like God, most Christlike? If we study Christ's life, and listen to His teaching, we see that His example and teaching can be summarized in two words: humility and charity. Jesus Christ, the divine exemplar of the spiritual life, insists, time and again, upon these fundamental dispositions: a perfect, a childlike humility, and love of God and one's fellowmen.

To a woman who accepts her feminine position and role, humility and charity come more naturally and easily than to the average man. For a woman who accepts her destiny, humility is not difficult. Pride, the major obstacle to the flowering of the interior life, is characteristically a masculine vice. Women may often be vain, but vanity is not pride. That very inferiority with regard to the values which the world esteems, will, if accepted, lay a solid foundation for woman's humility. Her providential task, that of motherhood, is a humble task. And if, owing to her own free choice, or to circumstances, she does not achieve motherhood but turns instead to nursing, education, social

work, medicine, and so on, these tasks too are generally humble tasks where the dangers of pride can more easily be avoided. The very circumstances which, according to some psychologists, produce in women a feeling of inferiority, can, if accepted, become women's greatest assets in the ways of the spirit.

How different is the picture of man! He owes it to himself or to his family or group to achieve, to conquer, to advance; the more he succeeds, the less his interiority and spirituality may profit. And even if he does not succeed, there still exists the danger of a negative pride, of bitterness in failure.

It might give us pause to reflect that during His life on earth, all the enemies of Christ were men. Nor did the Christ ever show indignation or utter maledictions against women. Even the sinners among them were treated with kindness, perhaps because even in their sin they had remained humble. What pitted the Pharisees, the scribes, and the priests against Christ was their pride, that smug feeling of self-complacency that blinded them to the light shining before their eyes. If the women who lived in Jesus' time and land had not been debarred from public and sacerdotal functions, some of them doubtless would have clashed with their God. The fact that they were women saved them from that misfortune. Is this perhaps a symbol of the spiritual advantage of woman's destiny on earth, when she accepts that destiny?

For that condition is absolutely required. Proud women exist, and when a woman is proud, she can outdo most men in her unbridled pride. At the root of her pride is often a revolt against her feminine condition. Proud women are generally unhappy, unfeminine women.

Humility is only a preparatory condition, a step toward the

essence of sanctity which is the love of God and of one's fellow-men. The perfection of that double love constitutes the essence of sanctity.

Here again women are favored above the average man. Love of God obviously supposes knowledge of God; no one can love what he does not know. Not all knowledge, however, is equally conducive to love. And there is between typical masculine and feminine knowledge a difference, which, although not apparent in test results and psychological experiments, has been recognized by outstanding thinkers. We can express that difference simply in the following formula: Man's knowledge comes from his brain, while woman's knowledge comes from both brain and heart. Man's knowledge is a more logical, conceptual type, woman's is a more direct, intuitive type. Man reasons his way through life, while woman more frequently feels her way; man's thinking is generally clearer, better defined, more easily expressed, but he often sacrifices some of the riches and complexity of reality for the sake of logic and clarity. Woman's mind is somewhat hazier and more nebulous, because it hates to force the many intricacies of living, pulsating reality into the cold framework of logical concepts. Man's logical superiority has advantages in fields where clear distinctions and accurate analysis are required—in science, in technology, in jurisprudence, to some extent also in philosophy and in theology. Not so, however, where a continuous adaptation is required to the moving, complex reality of daily life. The feminine mind seems better adapted to the realities of everyday life and of ordinary social contacts. Man's mind is more at home in the conceptual world, woman's mind in the infraconceptual world. And since the realities of everyday life are generally infraconceptual, it is

not surprising that the feminine mind is better attuned to them.

But above the infraconceptual and the conceptual world, there is the supraconceptual transcendent reality, who is God. God can never adequately be grasped or expressed in concepts. Man will try to approach that supreme reality in his typical logical way; he frequently does not succeed, his mind is baffled by the Infinite. Many more men than women do not accept the existence of God, and men are more often atheists than are women. The proof for God's existence is both very simple and very profound—in fact, its strength lies in its very simplicity. Once one analyses it, the simplicity disappears, and so may the convincing force of the proof. Because man is more analytical than woman, he may come to the conclusion that the demonstration of God's existence has no value. It has a real value, and one would see it at once if, after analysing the proof, he would look at it again globally, synthetically, the way the average woman does quite naturally.

The primordial reality of God must be approached with one's whole soul, with intelligence, will, and heart. Woman does that more easily than man, and this may explain why she feels more at home in the religious field, why she believes more readily in God and loves Him more easily than does man.

Authentic love of God manifests itself in a love for one's fellowmen. In the teaching of Jesus the two are inextricably connected. It is impossible to love God without loving His image, man. Here again, the average woman is privileged above the average man. Because of the masculine predominance of the cerebral, of the power of logic, man is more egoistic; because of the predominance in her of the heart, of intuition and empathy, woman is more naturally altruistic. Science and ab-

stract knowledge have no other purpose than to bring reality within the grasp of the mind, they are essentially a movement from without to within. Intuition and sympathy, on the other hand, are more outgoing, they attempt a penetration of the other. Women can be egoistic; when they are, their egoism usually exceeds that of most men. But when they follow the inclinations of their nature, they will more easily go in the direction which Christian spirituality has unceasingly commended and praised. Maternal functions are essentially functions of humility, of self-forgetting charity. Man's natural tendency toward analysis, theoretical knowledge, combat, conquest, and domination go naturally in the opposite direction, and lead easily to ambition, pride, self-assertion, egoism. A man can be humble and charitable, and when he is, precisely because it comes less naturally to him, his humility and charity may be deeper than that of most women. It is, however, more difficult for him.

One might object here: All this is well and good. The highest conceivable ideal for a human being is to be and to live like the firstborn Son of God. But the main mission of Christ on earth was to extend the Kingdom of God, to save human souls; and the ones commissioned to carry on the sublime work are priests. Once again, man holds a privileged position.

However, Jesus Christ spent only three years of His life on earth in the work of the apostolate. Thirty years were spent in humble, hidden, monotonous work, in which all can imitate Him, but where the average woman can imitate Him more readily than most men.

We also forget too easily how the Christ proceeded in extending the Kingdom of God. His public life was devoted to



*two* activities: preaching and healing, illuminating the minds and curing the bodies. It would be better not to say that He came to save souls, but rather to save men, bodies and souls. Christ transmitted His miraculous powers to the apostles, and they proceeded as their Master had done: Through gracious divine prodigies to the hearts of their listeners, and from their hearts to their minds and souls. Today the Church, His prolonged Incarnation, carries on the work of Christ and His apostles by continuing to preach and to heal. Instead of the miraculous powers of Christ and the Apostles she uses the powers of charity for the sick, the infirm, the aged, and the orphans; charity in hospitals, clinics, orphanages; charity which feeds the hungry, nurses the sick, shelters the homeless, instructs the ignorant. The Church aims at men's souls, but she reaches them through bodies and hearts. The heart opens only before charity, humble, hard-working, devoted, self-forgetting charity. The bulk of that work of charity in the missions and throughout the world-wide Church is carried on by Sisters. While man carries on the *preaching* activities of Our Lord, woman carries on His *healing* activities. Today it seems that women have been invested with the thaumaturgic powers of Christ; they perform no miracles, or rather the miracles they perform are miracles of charity. They do not preach, or administer the Sacraments, their functions are humble and monotonous. But their work, in the sense of charitable endeavors, is as necessary for the spread of the Gospel as the labors of the priest, and we can truthfully say that the collaboration of women is essential in the extension of the Mystical Body of Christ.

And women who have never heard the call of religion, have they nothing to do in the spreading of the Kingdom of God?

They decidedly have. The Church exists in her members, the faithful who believe in Christ. Without that basic belief and faith in Christ the Church would soon disappear from the earth. Faith is a gift of God, but it depends also on human influences, and no influence is more important here than that of the mother, whose whole life shows profound supernatural spirit, living faith, devotion and abnegation, humility, patience, and charity. Mothers endure hardships and trials with such unbroken spirit and humble confidence that, considering the fundamental weakness of human nature and the frailty of our flesh, we cannot but conclude that this constant, patient, self-forgetting virtue is possible only through supernatural influence. It is not a natural phenomenon. Only God can work such hidden marvels in our poor human clay; here is authentic holiness.

We may safely conclude that, if we consider as the most desirable values those which are actually the highest, women, far from being handicapped, are privileged, both as individual persons and as members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

But what is the position of men in all this? It is often said, and not without reason, that by nature man is less religious-minded than woman. The contrast is perhaps not so striking in America as it is in many European and Latin American countries, where the women have, by and large, remained faithful to the Church, whereas the bulk of the men have lost their faith or at least given up the practice of religion.

The difference may be explained, at least in part, by what we have said about some of the basic differences between the sexes. Religion supposes surrender and love, and both of them come more easily to woman than to man. Yet this cannot be the total

explanation, for it is inadmissible that God, "who knows what is in man," would have made the supreme human duty incompatible with the basic inclination of one half of the human race.

And, in fact, when we study the history of religion, we see that religion is at least as much man's concern as woman's. The great majority of religious sects have been founded and led by men, religious strife and wars for the sake of religion are mostly man's doing. The Christian religion was founded by a God-man, preached all over the earth by men, and continues to be guided and directed by men. Quite a number of the greatest saints were men. But piety seems to come more easily to the average woman than to the average man. He has in his make-up more obstacles to overcome in order to lead a devout life. Fewer men than women are attracted to a life of sanctity but perhaps when a man decides to lead such a life, since it comes less naturally to him, he has to make his decision more consciously and more freely, and as a result may be more deeply religious than the average woman.

Another reason has been advanced to explain man's lesser preoccupation with religious values. Karl Rahner suggests that, among others, it may be owing to the fact that Christianity, especially in the last centuries and in Europe, has tended to emphasize those traits which appeal more to women than to men. He sees in this trend not a development, but a deviation, which could and should have been avoided. He explains indirectly what that deviation is when he presents his conception of a more masculine Christianity.

Rahner insists that no exorbitant demands should be made on man in the religious domain. We should not ask too much

of him or try to foist upon him a style of piety that is a burden to him. This recommendation implies two things. We must measure carefully what reasonably can be asked of a man of *today*, engaged in a profession or a trade, whose attention is claimed by a thousand things that did not exist in past ages, absorbing energy that was formerly available for religious pursuits. One should not try to shape the average Catholic man precisely after the model of a canonized saint. Saints are to the average Catholic what a professional athlete is to the amateur; one cannot expect the same performances from both. Rahner even has a good word to say for Catholic men in European and Latin American countries who rarely attend Mass on Sundays. He does not praise their conduct, but neither does he claim that they have given up their religion which is, after all, more than a sum of clearly defined performances. They might be called Catholic fellow travelers. While remaining dogmatically "intolerant," we must be tolerant in practice, and not overlook the many beautiful examples of Christian virtues that appear in the lives of these Catholics.

The advice not to overburden man in the field of religion implies something else, which goes deeper. We should not impose on man too many things that go against his deepest inclinations. This too, of course, could be easily misunderstood. Some of these inclinations are a result of man's fallen nature, and he must react against them. But others do not seem to derive from original sin, and it is of them that the German theologian is speaking.

Catholicism, he says, contains a *categorical* and a *transcendental* element; women are more attracted by the categorical, men by the transcendental element. The categorical refers to

the visible, tangible, bodily, institutional elements which are embodied in living persons and can be put down in formulas, rules, commandments, whose observation can be checked and controlled. That element is essential and indispensable, yet it is insufficient without the other, the transcendental component, which, over and beyond the visible, tangible, institutional signs, laws, and duties, refers to the invisible, intangible, infinitely remote, wholly "other" reality of God Himself.

There has been a tendency, in Western Christianity, to stress the categorical rather than the transcendental, with the result that, while women have felt more and more at home in the Church, men have become increasingly uneasy within the ancient house of faith, as if piety and devotion were too feminine for the coarser stuff of which they happen to be made.

Since man is more attracted by the transcendental element of religion, and since this entails certain dangers, he should try to develop the other aspect too. But it remains a fact that man does not easily regard a long prayer as better than a short one. He is slightly skeptical when "Priests speak of God and things divine as if we were the secretaries of the Almighty. Man has the impression nowadays that the God with whom the priest is concerned does not exist. The good God who helps good people, who wants his own to be nice and to live somewhat like a bourgeois, who seems above all concerned that there be no revolutions, which he considers as so many attempts against his own sovereign dominion, who allows us priests to keep his books for Him, and who puts altar and human authority (we used to say: Altar and Throne) on the same level: this God modern man does not know."

Men more often than women are atheists, for their analytic

intellect cannot capture the transcendent in the mazes of their concepts. Women's more synthetic approach enables them to feel at once the overwhelming evidence for God's existence. If, however, a man, while searching for God, succeeds in transcending logic at the same time that he uses it, he will generally have a greater awareness of the ineffable greatness of the Supreme Being. That may explain, as Rahner puts it, why man often gets the impression that explicit religious activities are out of proportion with the Being to whom they refer. Man prefers to honor the Ineffable in silence. He does not try to look up at Him; he hopes that God will look down upon His servant, upon his selfless, honest work, his unassuming goodness, his basic decency, his uncomplaining patience. Man feels that God is there, near him, behind him, as long as he does not try to name the One Who is beyond all names, to see the One Who is invisible. Man is not attracted to the anthropomorphic God whom he feels the Church wants him to worship.

There may be a certain amount of pride or self-deception here, but not everything in this attitude is to be condemned. The priest must take the modern cultivated man as he is. He must show him that he too is aware of walking among shadows and images, and not confuse fidelity with fanaticism.

The task of today's priest is not an easy one. His sacred vocation is also his profession, and the danger exists that he may become the Church's "professional" servant. By their sympathy and deep religious understanding laymen can help the priest to perform what is his duty.

Men would feel more at home in the Church if more attention were paid to some kind of public opinion within it. The late Pope Pius XII called for such a public opinion. That im-

plies a certain right to criticize what, after mature reflection, one cannot help seeing as a weakness or defect. In the ages of greater faith, public criticism of the Church may have meant a lack of love for the Church. Today people who do not love the Church leave and forget about her. In our time it is more often true that he who criticizes the Church is interested in her and loves her.

A Catholic man should translate his faith into action, in which the layman takes over some of the very duties of the priest and takes part in the hierarchic apostolate. But such activity will, by its very nature, always constitute a small part of man's life. And it is this *total* activity which must be put in the service of God and of the Church, simply by being executed honestly, competently, for decent purposes. That is not, however, the total task of the Christian. He must also pray, love God and his neighbor, observe the Commandments, bear the trials and tribulations of life. This constitutes the bulk of his task as a Catholic man, and, by doing his job well, he serves his God well. "Christ is as much 'in their midst' where the board meets as where the rosary is being recited."<sup>4</sup>

Today's highly complicated technical world is a man's world. In that world he has a task, which starts with simple, obvious things. Friendliness, professional competence, reliability, honesty, sense of responsibility, the bearing of the daily share of trouble, asceticism in the presence of multiplying opportunities for pleasure, a reasonable restraint in the pursuit of enjoyment. This is natural, yet is also supernatural, because one cannot persevere in it without grace.

Man will sanctify himself by doing a good job as a husband,

4. Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

a father, in his profession, his business, or his trade. Although these are profane tasks, they have a meaning for life eternal. For man will be able to carry out his human task in this world only if he is aware that there is something above the temporal and the sensible. "Thus man's piety acquires a meaning for his temporal tasks, and while he works and toils at them and sometimes suffers under them, he learns piously, that is, in humility and love, to stay open for that ineffable mystery which, far above all that which can be experienced, is the ultimate meaning of all empirical realities and the final solution of all problems, and which, in humble adoration, we call God." <sup>5</sup>

Both women and men are children of God. They are equal, but different. By accepting their God-given nature and task, their differences, their assets and liabilities, in humility, confidence, and love, they will, together, make their way through life, under the protection of their Mother Mary, toward their Father who is in heaven.

5. Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 309.







[Continued from front flap]

W. NORRIS considers the problem of authority and the role of the individual conscience. ROBERT W. GLEASON indicates the renewed interest in Biblical studies among Catholic scholars. JOSEPH S. DUHAMEL gives a lucid presentation of the much misunderstood Catholic position on birth control, and HAROLD C. GARDINER explains the Catholic view on the controversial subject of censorship of books and films, including the *Index*, the Legion of Decency, and the National Offices for Decent Literature. Finally JOSEPH S. DONCEEL analyzes the varied roles played by men and women in the church.

## About the editor . . .

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